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BALE SCORES HAT-TRICK
AGAINST SHEFFIELD UTD

Bengal Opp badly battered

8 workers of BJP and Left killed; TMC rejects allegation of party's role

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Ruthless attacks on the van-ers continued in West Bengal with at least 8 people losing their lives to alleged Trinamool Congress violence in various parts of the State in the past 24 hours or so, reports said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made a public appeal asking the people to remain indoors and refrain from engaging in violence, but political animosity degenerated into bloodshed.

Indian Secular Front worker Hasanur Zaman was repeatedly bombed to death at De Ganga in North 24 Parganas while BJP worker Haran Adhikari was shot in Sonarpur.

Another BJP supporter succumbed to bullet injury at Moynaguri in Jalpaiguri district of North Bengal. A third BJP worker was shot dead at Burapancha village near

Sitalkuchi in Coochbehar where CAPF firing had claimed four lives during the elections.

A woman was bumped off at Ranaghat in Nadia district while a Left supporter was killed in Murshidabad, sources said. Another BJP man was allegedly beaten to death at Belegkata in North Kolkata, party men alleged.

Properties, including motorcycles, of BJP and CPI(M) supporters were destroyed at Chakdaha, Haringkata and other areas of Nadia district, sources said.

Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh alleged that the houses of BJP men were vandalised and torched at Bhagwanpur and Patashpur in East Midnapore while saffron party offices were torched at Balurghat and North Dinajpur in North Bengal. He appealed to the Chief Minister to "stop this carnage and let the people live in peace."

Ghosh led a team of BJP leaders to meet the Governor at Raj Bhavan. He said, "Elections are over and whatever ill-feeling should now be forgotten... Instead of that our workers and those of some other political parties are being systematically targeted, beaten up, murdered and their properties destroyed. We have been forced to transfer the victims of this violence to other safer places. I request the Chief Minister to order her men to stop this or else we shall be forced to resume campaign from tomorrow."

Refuting the charges, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "Our leader Mamata Banerjee has asked people not to indulge in violence. In none of the cases, the TMC is involved. In fact, it is the fight between the old and the new BJP men. The old BJP men are beating up the new entrants who went from the TMC."

Nandigram recount was stopped at gunpoint, will move court: Mamata



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses the media in Kolkata on Monday PTI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The people of West Bengal had put the rulers of Delhi in their place by handing them out a stunning loss in the Assembly elections and this "proves that the BJP is not a shahenshah," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said.

Mamata will take oath for the third time in a row as Bengal Chief Minister on May 5, senior party leader and Minister of the outgoing State Cabinet Partho Chatterjee said after the TMC Legislator party on Monday unanimously elected her as the Leader of the TMC Legislature Party.

She alleged the BJP had misused the poll body to defeat

her but failed, "thanks to the people of Bengal".

Refusing to let her anger on the Election Commission die down, Mamata complained how the counting of votes at Nandigram was manipulated at gunpoint to ensure that she lost by a wafer-thin margin.

"I have an SMS with me... it was sent by someone... it said the Returning Officer of Nandigram was forced not to order a recount at gunpoint... he said he had risk his life and family if he ordered a recount... But I will not take it lying down. I will move the court and definitely tell all the officials to preserve the VVPAT and other papers," she said.

India Inc calls for lockdown to save lives

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Supreme Court advised the Central and State Governments to consider a lockdown to break the chain of Covid-19 transmission, prominent industrialist and trader bodies have called for a nationwide shutdown.

Prominent industrialist and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president Uday Kotak called for the curtailment of economic activity "to reduce suffering" due to the deadly second wave of Covid-19 cases in India.

"At this critical juncture when the toll of lives is rising, the CII urges the strongest national steps, including curtailment economic activity, to reduce suffering," Uday Kotak said in a tweet.

Kotak has asked for the highest-level response measures to address the rising wave of Covid-19 cases, as currently safeguarding lives is key to cut the transmission links.

"The healthcare infrastructure and supply build-up are being undertaken on an emergency basis by the Governments at the Centre and States, but will take time," he said.

Earlier, several experts as well as leading economists suggested the Government a nationwide lockdown is the only solution to break the chain of Covid infections. From US epidemiologist Anthony Fauci to AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria, all have suggested a complete lockdown.

An online survey conducted by the Confederation of

All India Traders (CAIT) showed that at least 67.5 per cent participants are in favour of nationwide lockdown while 78.2 per cent people have said they agreed that corona has become uncontrollable.

CAIT national president and secretary general Praveen Khandelwal on Monday urged the Prime Minister to immediately impose a nationwide lockdown in order to break the chain of infections during the second Covid-19 wave.

CAIT said in the event of a national lockdown, the trading community across the country will ensure the supply of essential items like last year. Over 9,000 respondents participated in the online survey.

Amid an exponential rise in coronavirus cases, the SC on Sunday urged the Centre and States "to consider imposing a lockdown to break the chain in the interest of public welfare".

UP EXTENDS LOCKDOWN FOR 2 MORE DAYS

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh Government has extended the coronavirus-induced curfew in the entire State by two more days, May 6. As per the latest order, the restrictions will remain in place in all 75 districts till May 6 morning. The restrictions were slated to be lifted on May 4 morning. This is the second extension of lockdown-like curfew in the country's most populous State.

IAF plane flies 12 hrs at stretch from Frankfurt to bring oxygen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the tempo of air-lifting the much-needed oxygen from abroad, an aircraft of the IAF flew non-stop for 12 hours to bring home oxygen from Frankfurt, Germany. The C-17 transport plane ferried four empty cryogenic containers from there and landed at the Hindon airbase, Ghaziabad.

Similarly, another C-17 aircraft airlifted 450 oxygen cylinders from Brize Norton in the UK to the Chennai airbase in Tamil Nadu. In the past few days, the IAF planes carried out numerous sorties to ferry the containers from Singapore, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.

O2 piles on K'taka agony, 24 die

PTI ■ BENGALURU

In yet another hospital tragedy in the country in recent days, 24 patients, 23 of them Covid-infected, died in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar due to alleged oxygen shortage in the district hospital in the last 24 hours, with the Government warning of stringent action against those found guilty.

The Government ordered a probe into the matter and appointed senior IAS officer Shivayogi Kalasad as the inquiry officer.

Following the incident, Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa convened a meeting with oxygen producers, where a number of decisions were taken to ensure supply of allocated quantity of oxygen to the State by the Centre.



Relatives grieve after death of Covid patients due to shortage of oxygen cylinders in Chamarajanagara District of Karnataka on Monday PTI

Among these were to reduce the time taken to refill oxygen tankers, provide a green corridor for faster commuting of oxygen tankers and avoid unnecessary delay at toll gates.

Utilising the service of the LPG tanker drivers in case of emergency was also another important decision.

Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar maintained that only

three people had died due to oxygen shortage and not 24 as reported, though he stressed that the probe would reveal the truth.

The incident evoked a sharp response from the Congress, with party leader Rahul Gandhi wondering "how much more suffering before the 'system' wakes up."

In heart-breaking episodes preceding today's incident in the country, a fire at a mall in Mumbai housing a Covid-designated hospital in March left nine, including those on ventilators, dead, while 22

Covid-19 patients who were either on ventilator or oxygen support, suffocated to death when their oxygen supply stopped suddenly due to a malfunction in the main storage at a civic hospital in Nashik.

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	2,02,19,578 (+2,99,715)
DEATHS:	2,21,356 (+2,409)
RECOVERED:	1,65,46,717 (+2,64,775)
ACTIVE:	34,42,730
MAHA:	47,71,022 (+48,621)
KERALA:	16,64,790 (+26,011)
K'TAKA:	16,46,303 (+44,438)
UP:	13,42,413 (+29,052)
DELHI:	11,94,946 (+20,394)

Take criticism by Madras HC in right spirit, SC tells EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday rejected the pleas of Election Commission of India to ban media reporting on the Madras High Court's observations that the poll panel was singularly responsible for Covid-19 deaths and it should be booked for murder.

Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah advised the EC to take the criticism by the Madras High Court in the right spirit. "The ECI is a sea-



soned constitutional body which has been entrusted with functions of conducting the elections. We cannot in today's times say media will not report the discussions that take place in court," the Bench said.

The Bench went on to point out that the discussions that take place in the courts are of importance and are in pub-

lic interest. "It's not a monologue that one person will speak and then judges will speak. We have an Indian pattern of arguments in court... There is an aspect of the application of mind. First prayer of don't report what is said in court was farfetched," said Justice Chandrachud rejecting the EC plea.

"When something is observed, it's in the larger public interest. They (Judges) are also humans and they are also stressed... Take this in the correct spirit," said Justice Shah.

'Purchase order of 5.29 cr doses placed'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that free vaccination for people between 18 and 45 years of age will start from May 5. Purchase orders have been issued to both the vaccine manufacturers keeping in view the potential requirement of 5.29 crore doses for vaccination.

Possibilities for import are also being examined for the earliest supply of dosages for vaccination. He said that the vaccination of those above 45 year will continue as before. Chouhan was addressing a meeting of Covid Core Group



on Monday in connection with the prevention and arrangements of Covid-19 from his residence through video conferencing.

Chouhan has said that effective monitoring of home isolation system should be ensured in rural areas. Panchayat Rural Development, Forest, Health Department staff and local public representatives

should coordinate and ensure best arrangements. In the absence of proper arrangements for isolation at home, the infected person should be transferred to the Covid Care Center. Vehicles can also be arranged if required. He stressed the need to ensure implementation of health related tests at prescribed rates. He said that strict action should be taken in cases of tests being conducted at higher than prescribed rates.

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COVID IN MADHYA PRADESH			
Dists	Total	Cases	Fresh Cases
Bhopal	94803	1669	
Indore	116280	1787	
Gwalior	41469	910	



Workers unload liquid oxygen from a tanker at a storage at Government Hamidia hospital amid a coronavirus pandemic in Bhopal on Monday Pioneer photo

CAPSULE

COVID HITS IPL: KKR-RCB MATCH POSTPONED

New Delhi: A Covid-19 outbreak left the star-sprinkled IPL on tenterhooks as Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravarty and Sandeep Warrier tested positive for the dreaded virus, forcing postponement of their game against Royal Challengers Bangalore, while cases also came to light in the Chennai Super Kings camp.

DELHI RECORDS MAX TEMP OF 39.7 DEGREES C

New Delhi: The national Capital on Monday recorded a maximum temperature of 39.7 degrees Celsius, one notch above the season's normal, according to the India Meteorological Department. The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative figures for the city, recorded a minimum temperature at 24.3 degrees Celsius. Partly cloudy sky with possibility of thunder and lightning is expected in the city on Tuesday, the IMD said.

NEET-PG deferred for 4 months, medicos to join Covid battle

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of an unprecedented rise in Covid-19 cases across the country, the Government has decided to postpone NEET-PG for at least four months. The decision was taken at the high-level review meeting held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It was decided that the State and Union Territories Governments are to make all efforts to reach out to each such prospective NEET candidates and request them "to join the Covid-19 workforce in this hour of need. The services of these MBBS doctors can be utilised in the management of Covid-19," said a statement



from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

A series of important decisions were taken "to boost availability of medical personnel to fight Covid-19," it said. The NEET-PG exam will not be held before August 30.

"Students will also be given at least one month of time after announcement of exam before it is conducted. This will make a large number of qualified doctors available for Covid duties," said the statement.

Kalaighnar at Stalin's coronation!

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's sombre mood due to Covid-19 pandemic gave way to celebrations, music, dance and bursting of firecrackers since Sunday evening when it was known that MK Stalin would form the next government as the DMK won a comfortable majority in the legislative Assembly polls.

By late Sunday evening, the DMK headquarters and Stalin's personal bungalow came under a security blanket as the cops of the State Armed Police took over the entire route.

Limousines with Government number plates were the first ones to reach Stalin's house and since then there has been no end to the number of visitors calling in. DMK cadre from all over the State flooded the party headquarters as the route to Stalin's residence was completely taken



over by security men.

It was fun, music and dance everywhere. Party activists with pictures of Stalin pinned to their pockets (a

show of obeisance to Thalopathy, as Stalin is addressed by friends and cadre) were seen distributing sweets to all those who had visited the

party headquarters.

Iniyavan, popularly known as Idli King of Tamil Nadu, had come to the party office to pay his respect to the Chief

Minister designate. He made the day a memorable one to all those who had come to the party headquarters with a special gift. A specially made idli, aptly titled Kalaighnar Idli, was Iniyavan's gift to Stalin. It took him and four of his assistants nearly ten hours to cook the idli which resembled the face of M Karunanidhi, the former Chief Minister and Stalin's father.

"This is a special idli and not for consuming. It has nine kinds of grains engraved on it with colouring agents approved by the Food and Drug Agency. This is our tribute to Karunanidhi as well as a welcome gift for Stalin," said Iniyavan, who holds a world record in the different varieties of idlis. Iniyavan can make more than 100 varieties of idlis, namely, chocolate idli, coconut idli, vanilla idli, jasmine idli, carrot idli and a host of steam cakes with different flavours.

DAMOH BYPOLL

My defeat result of BJP's sabotage: Lodhi

BJP candidate who lost to Cong had joined BJP in March 2020

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The BJP candidate in Damoh by-election Rahul Lodhi alleged that sabotage by BJP activists during election, was responsible for his defeat. To his allegations, former Minister Jayant Malaiya stated that he lost to the electorate only. Factually, he indicated towards former Minister and senior BJP leader Jayant Malaiya, in whose ward, the BJP lost to Congress. It was entirely a different by-election in Madhya Pradesh. Damoh assembly constituency

fell vacant after Congress' sitting MLA Rahul Lodhi joined the BJP in March 2020. It was a different one for the electorate and the BJP too. The BJP had fielded the same leader Rahul Lodhi from Damoh. People found it difficult to forget that Lodhi in last election held in 2018, had contested from Congress. The BJP leaders and activists failed to convince the electorate that Lodhi, who had crossed the floor and would work for the welfare of people. It seems that the strategy of former chief minister Kamal Nath that people of the constituency would contest election against Lodhi. On Monday, while talking to media persona, former Minister Jayant Malaiya pulled up Lodhi for accusing him for the defeat, saying that he

(Malaiya) too won seven elections in a row, but in 2018 got defeated by Rahul Lodhi, but he did not make any issue. Counting the reasons behind Rahul Lodhi's defeat in the by-election, Malaiya said that people of the constituency did not accept his candidature as a BJP nominee. Regarding his defeat from Malaiya's ward, Malaiya said that Lodhi's defeat margin is more than 17,000 and he lost in almost all the wards of the city. However, he told that he would put forth his point of view before the party and he does not need to reply on allegations. Finally, Congress MLA Rahul Lodhi who had resigned as a legislator to join the BJP, failed to get elected in the by-poll and he would remain an ordinary BJP activist.



BMC employees with an anti-fogger machine spray disinfectant in front of the district court during Covid-19 curfew imposed to curtail the rapidly spiraling chain of coronavirus infections, in Bhopal on Monday

Youth who failed to clear MPPSC exams hangs self

Bhopal: Failing to clear MPPSC and depressed over unemployment, a 29-year-old man committed suicide by hanging with the ceiling at his house in Nariyalkheda under Gautam Nagar police station area on Sunday. Police said that the deceased, Dinesh Kumar, committed suicide at his house. The deceased was MPPSC aspirants and failed to get job. The deceased managed to clear prelims of MPPSC twice but failed to clear interview. He was also undergoing treatment at psychiatric Dr. RN Sahu and was under medication. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and started further investigation. **SR**

Man dies, friend injured after speeding tractor hit bike

Bhopal: A 32-year-old man died while his friend escaped with injuries after their bike was hit by a speeding tractor near Amoni railway crossing under Sukhisewania police station area on Sunday. According to the police, two injured men were rushed to hospital who were severely injured after their bike was hit by a speeding tractor. One of the injured men was declared dead and was identified as Arun Kumar Lodhi of Amoni village while the injured was identified as Jai escaped with injuries. Police said that after the incident the tractor driver escaped the spot. The body was sent for the post mortem after the preliminary investigation. The police have registered a case under section 304 A of the IPC and have started further investigation to search the

errant tractor driver. The injured persons is reportedly critical, said police. Meanwhile, a 45-year-old driver from Maharashtra died under suspicious circumstances who came with truck carrying Mangoes from Maharashtra at Eintkhedi area on Sunday. The deceased Mohammad Noor reported illness and other driver of the truck Praveen provided him with medicine but when he failed to get relief, he was taken to hospital where he was declared dead. Police said the circumstantial evidences suggest that the deceased died of cardiac arrest but it could not be ascertained and would be revealed after post mortem. Police were informed and on the receipt of the information a police team reached and started investigation. **SR**

Man booked for abusing, raping 20-yr-old girl on pretext of marriage

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Nishatpura police have booked a man for sexually assaulting and exploiting a 20-year-old girl on the pretext of marrying her and later assaulted her and abused her of caste; victim lodged a complaint with police on Sunday. Police said both the accused Sandeep Mourya and victim were acquainted and accused took her to a hotel where he sexually assaulted her and later assured her of marriage and sexually exploit her. The victim in her complaint stated that she was acquainted with the accused and the two later developed relationship and luring her of marriage accused took her to a hotel and unaware of the ill intentions the victim accompanied her where she was sexually assaulted. After committing the heinous crime the accused

assured that he would marry her and later continued to sexually exploit her. Later when the victim asked to marry the accused he refused and threatened her life, abused her of caste but the victim informed the incident to the family. The victim along with the family members lodged a complaint with the crime branch. Police have registered a case under sections 376 and 506 of the IPC and SC-ST Preventions Act and have started further investigation. The accused is yet to be arrested. Meanwhile, Eintkhedi police have booked a man for molesting a 25-year-old married woman on Sunday; police have started search for accused. Chandan Silawat molested the victim who had gone for some work near her house and when she raised alert locals came to her rescue during which accused escaped the spot.

Heavy rainfall, thunder activities witnessed in State

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After extreme hot climate witnessed across the state, heavy downpour and thundery activities dip day temperatures significantly in the past two days. Dense cloudy conditions were witnessed in the day on Monday in Bhopal and rainfall was witnessed in the afternoon bringing down the soaring mercury and later bright sunlight was witnessed. Bhopal witnessed 35 degree Celsius while night temperature was recorded at 21 degree Celsius. On Tuesday, Bhopal would witness partial cloudy conditions and thundery activities with gusty winds. Few regions reported good rainfall in the state, Paali and Bareilly recorded 2 cm, Bheempur, Atner, Ashta, Dabra, Naalcha 1 cm of rainfall recorded in the past 24 hours. The weather conditions is

Podar Learn School signs 13 franchisees in 2020-2021

PNS ■ CHHINDWARA

Podar Learn School (PLS), the best education franchise in India, providing complete all-round assistance in setting up a new school has signed up 13 franchisees in 2020-2021 across India in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh states during the Covid-19 pandemic. PLS has been focussing on delivering quality education especially in rural towns of India. These 13 franchisees are across Ranebennur, Latur, Parbhani, Buldhana, Nasik, Solapur, Satara and Chhindwara. Even as the entire country went under lockdown and schools shut transitioning to online medium, PLS has continued to expand its footprint with the aim of enhancing the quality of education and operations in CBSE/ICSE schools. With 13 new franchisees on board, the initiative now has a network of 32 schools across the country. The geographical

spread of this network is predominantly in Tier 2 cities, small towns, and semi-rural areas, reflecting the initiative's endeavour to make quality education accessible to children at the grassroots level. The success of the PLS initiative has already started showing results with large number of students enrolled so far. Mr. Harsh Podar, Director, Podar Education Network said, "The idea behind Podar Learn School is to harness inspired and deserving individuals with a passion for education and a yearning to give back to the society. PLS not only provides but enables them with financially lucrative opportunities to realise this passion. Keeping in mind that the vast majority of Indians live beyond the select Tier-1 and metropolitan cities, the Podar Group of Schools has specifically aimed this initiative to establish Podar Learn Schools across the small towns of India thereby standardising and raising quality of education."

UYSPWC organises online medical counselling for isolated Covid patients

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Uddeshya Youth Social and Public Welfare Committee organised an online interaction with doctors for the Covid patients on Monday. It was organised for patients who are isolated in the houses and for those patients who are unable to consult the doctors for any problem due to corona, the organization's Facebook page NGO uddeshya yuva samajik evam jankalyan samiti broadcasts the interaction with nasal throat and allergist consulted with Dr. Ruchir Varshney. The coordinator of the event, Bhavya Saxena, said that more than 100 patients on Facebook, Dr. Discussed for

consultation with Ruchir Varshney, in which many covid positive patients also asked questions regarding their treatment and health and general patients also asked their questions. The patients asked their queries like Which test do we have to undergo when there is corona, which of the rapid antigens or RT-PCR are more reliable? What should be taken if BP sugar medicines are being administered to Covid positive patients? What would be appropriate for a sore throat? How many days after recovery from Covid can we donate plasma? If there is too much weakness in the body due to Covid, then what should be changed in the diet for it? Dr. Ruchir Varshney told

LKSAG displays Padmashree Vishnuvakankar art works

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Lalit Kala Samiti art gallery displays, 50 artworks of Padmashree Vishnuvakankar along with 52 of his students. The exhibition can be seen online on Facebook and on WhatsApp. The artists have presented their perceptions over the canvas and sculptures that clearly showcases their love for nature. They have tried to bring the charm and sheer beauty of the nature in their own way. Each one of them has his own way of handling colours and forms. They are spontaneous, expressive and open to any mode of art and art material. They are experimenting with zest and finding their solutions to start a long journey. It is the beginning of their walk in to the unknown world of art and expression. The new set of artists with new ways of seeing and using same old medium display their creations. As the painters and ceramic artists exhibited their artistic works at the gallery, the art enthusiasts are loving the creativity that they showcased at the gallery.

IGRMS exhibits Himachal folk community's 'Baksa'



STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under the latest and popular online series of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya entitled 'Exhibit of the Week' the 'Baksa', a wooden box collected from the folk community of Himachal Pradesh in 1979 was exhibited. This is the 50th exhibition under the Exhibit of the Week displayed in the audience as The First Exhibit of the month of May, 2021 through official website, Facebook, Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS. In this regard Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (National Museum of Mankind), Initially this series will focus on the masterpieces from its collection which are considered as unique for their contribution to the cultural history of a particular ethnic

group or area. Baksa is a rectangular wooden box made of local seasoned wood and its outer surface is covered with Deer skin. This object was collected from Himachal Pradesh - a northern state of India. The beautifully designed metal plate fittings at the corner makes the Baksa more appealing. It was used to store clothes and other precious belongings. The decoration of household objects among the folk communities is purely personal taste. In past decades skins of animals, including the wild animals, were used to fulfill multiple necessities like clothing, shoes, furniture, household decorations etc. Now a days, the use of wild animals skins are limited to a great extent due to ban on the poaching of wild animals. Therefore, such objects are now rare and unique and can mostly be seen as a part of museum collection.

Tribute paid to Urdu writer Manzoor Ehteshaam

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Manzoor Ehteshaam increased the purity and sweetness of Urdu language," said writer Gyan Chaturvedi. A tribute to prominent writer of the country Manzoor Ehteshaam was paid on Monday. Smriti Sabha was organised on Monday in memory of prominent Urdu writers. "Manzoor Ehteshaam's death is the sudden departure of a man whom God has created to become a writer. He had greatly increased the sweetness of Urdu". These emotions were expressed by the noted satirist of the country, Padmashri Gyan Chaturvedi, at the Smriti Sabha organized by the Global Hindi Family, Central Hindi Institute and Hindi Bhavan, Bhopal. Manzoor Ahtesham was an Indian writer of Hindi literature known for his depiction of the lives of the Indian Muslim community in the independent India. Ahtesham was born in 1948 in Bhopal, in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh and did his studies at the Aligarh Muslim University. This online programme was co-organized and conducted by Jawahar Karnavat, Director, Hindi Bhavan. In the Smriti Sabha, poet lyricist Kunwar Bechain, former editor of Madhuri and the creator of Parallel Dictionary Arvind Kumar, famous classical singer Rajan Mishra. Tributes were also paid to Suresh Gautam and Bulgarian language singer and folk song singer Dheera Verma. At the memorial meeting, Anil Joshi, Vice-Chairman of the Central Hindi Institute, Ministry of Education, Padmashri Tomio Mizokami, Hindi scholar from Japan, poet Anoop Bhargava from America, Shailaja Saxena from Canada, Vinod Mishra, Secretary General of World Hindi Secretariat Mauritius, U.K. from Jai Verma, Vice Chancellor Hari Mohan Pathak, former Deputy Director General of All India Radio, Lakshmi Shankar Bajpai, renowned writer Kamal Kishore Goenka, linguist Vijay Malhotra, eminent poet Praveen Shukla, Director of Microsoft Balendu Dadhich and other countries and countries. Many writers and linguists also paid their tributes. In the end, Navendu Vajpayee expressed his gratitude.



A view of a traffic jam during Covid-19 curfew imposed to curtail the rapidly spiraling chain of coronavirus infections, in Bhopal on Monday

House of BMC employee burgled

Valuables worth ₹1L stolen

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Residence of a BMC employee at Galla Mandi Chowki under Jehangirabad police station was targeted by miscreants and valuables worth ₹1 lakh were burgled on Sunday. Police said that the victim Prem Narayan Vanshkar had gone to attend rituals after last rites of his sister at Chola Mandir and when he returned on valuables were found burgled. The victim in his complaint stated that he along with family had gone to attend rituals and when he returned door was found open and locks broken. On entering the house victim found that the valuables were targeted by the miscreants. Victim approached police and lodged a complaint. Based on the complaint after the preliminary investigation the police have registered a case under sections 457 and 380 of the IPC and have started fur-

ther investigation. The victim works with BMC. After checking the valuables victim found that Rs 32000 cash and gold and silver

jewelry were burgled. The total loss in the burglary is around Rs 1 lakh claimed the victim. Police suspects that the

burglars were aware regarding the whereabouts of the family and committed the burglary when the family was away.



A medic injects beneficiaries with Covid-19 vaccine inside an auto-rickshaw at India's first open air drive-in vaccination centre at drive-in-cinema in Bhopal on Monday. Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation has launched the drive to attract more people for the vaccination during the pandemic

Vaccination drive for people above 18 begins in Delhi

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Initiating its first vaccination drive for Covid-19 deterrence in 301 centres hosted in government schools for 18-44 age group, Delhi government on Monday said it will expand immunisation centres in all 272 wards for swift actions as vaccination is the only weapon to combat against coronavirus.

"About 92 Lakh people have been registered for the free vaccination drive for 18-44 years, a government official said. While the city administration aiming 3000 vaccination centres which will be operating in 300 schools across Delhi, many people faced had to visit inter-districts to get vaccinated due to non-availability of the vaccine at their nearest centres mentioned in the

list released by Delhi government on Sunday, particularly people residing in south-west district.

To surveillance the ongoing vaccination drive in limited centres, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai also visited in different centres located West Vinod Nagar and Shahdara.

Explaining the situation, Sisodia said the government received 4.5 lakh vaccination doses until now, on the basis of which 301 vaccination centres have been made in 76 schools across Delhi, vaccinating 45,100 citizens. "The West Vinod Nagar Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya School in itself has 5 centres that are working parallelly in the school. We want to ensure that all citizens between the ages of

18-45 are vaccinated, and are committed to scale vaccination centres in Delhi in a way that each school has 10 vaccination centres."

Rai, also said on the second consignment of the vaccine, "We are regularly communicating and as and when we receive the consignment, we will keep increasing the number of centres"

As per the data of Delhi government, more than 33 lakh doses have been administered since the initiation of Covid-19 vaccination in Delhi till now. "More than 7 lakh beneficiaries have been completely vaccinated with 2 doses of vaccination while daily vaccination capacity for the 45 plus age group is about 60,000," a Delhi government official said.

Punjab asks Centre to provide more oxygen tankers

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday appealed to the Centre for more oxygen tankers to be made available to the state, which did not have enough such vehicles to transport the life-saving gas for seriously ill Covid-19 patients.

The Chief Minister, at the Covid review meeting, said the state urgently need more tankers, as it currently had only 15 at its disposal, with two more likely to come in by Tuesday.

These, he said, were not enough to handle the requirement for transporting the oxygen supplies coming in from other states.

Punjab has 195 metric tonnes (MT) allocation from various plants in other states, but the actual supply received over the past seven days has been around 110-120 MT daily,

and this has also been erratic, the Chief Minister noted.

In this period, the number of patients on oxygen support has gone up from 4,000 to around 9,000, and though the state government's steps to monitor and streamline supplies through its controls rooms has helped in keeping things stable, the situation remains fluid and a matter of concern, he added.

The current consumption of oxygen in the state is more than 225 MT daily, while the average increase in demand every day is around 15-20 per cent.

Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan told the meeting that in addition to the shortage of trucks available with transporters in the state, the fact that a tanker takes around four-five days to bring the 90 MT quota allocation from a Bokaro plant has made things worse.

Unless the state gets more tankers, the situation could aggravate, she added.

In addition to 90 MT from Bokaro, the state's current allocation is: 60 MT from a plant in Himachal Pradesh's Baddi, 20 MT from a plant in Haryana's Panipat, and 15 MT from a plant in Roorkee and 10 MT from plant in Dehradun, both in Uttarakhand.

Besides, around 80 MT is generated daily from the state ASUs & local PSA, and steps are being taken to increase production on a continuous basis, she said, adding, however, that this was not sufficient to meet the increasing demand.

Medical Education Minister O.P. Soni said more oxygen cylinders were also needed at government hospitals to meet the growing requirement.

'Not in favour of total lockdown, but will impose if needed'

Chandigarh: Even as he made it clear that he was not in favour of a complete and harsh lockdown, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday warned people against laxity in adherence to the curbs imposed in the state, and said if the situation did not improve, he would be forced to consider a total lockdown.

The Chief Minister said he had so far refrained from ordering a sweeping lockdown in the state because it will hurt the poor the most and would lead to exodus of migrant labourers, plunging industries into chaos again.

However, if the people do not stringently comply with the restrictions in place, harsher steps might have to be taken, he added.

The state is currently in a soft lockdown situation, with strong curbs in place, with additional restrictions imposed by the government on Sunday.

DGP Dinkar Gupta told the meeting that all measures were being taken to enforce the current curbs strictly.

Chairing a high-level virtual meeting to review the Covid situation, the Chief Minister on Monday also ordered a stop on all take-away deliveries from restaurants, which was being used by youngsters as a pretext to move out of their homes. Only home deliveries of food should be allowed, he directed the officials. He, however, gave permission for shops selling fertilisers to be open.

Asserting that he will not allow Punjab to go the way of some other states, where patients could be seen lying out on the roads, the Chief Minister said that industry should be encouraged to use their CSR funds for vaccination and treatment of their labour suffering from mild or moderate illness, so that they can stay at home, thus reducing pressure on hospitals.

Underlining the need to step up preparedness amid projections of a peak in the coming days, he ordered 20 per cent increase in bed capacity in the next 10 days.

He directed the Health and Medical Education Departments to get stadiums,

gymnasiums and other such places ready to house patients.

Tented camps should be set up, and gyms and halls should be converted into L2 and L3 facilities, he said, adding that "we have to be prepared for the worst".

He also directed use of staff from Rural Development and other departments to augment the workforce for tracing of Covid contacts in rural areas.

The directives came as Health Minister Balbir Sidhu said the situation was grim with only 300 beds now available at L3 level in the state. Hospitals were getting overwhelmed, he added.

Health Secretary Hussan Lal pointed out that the state's positivity rate had on Sunday stood at 12 per cent, with the Malwa region showing increase cases in the last seven-10 days.

With L3 occupancy 90 per cent and in some cases 100 per cent, the situation was grim, he said, adding that CFR was close to two per cent and higher (at 2.7 per cent) in rural areas.

Home deaths currently were also at two per cent. The worrying factor was that 17 per cent of the all deaths had no co-morbid conditions, he said.

K.K. Talwar, head of the state's Covid expert committee, stressed the need to prioritise monitoring of home isolation cases to identify serious patients fast, especially in rural areas.

With no clarity still on whether mutation was responsible for the current spread, he also underlined the importance of increasing L3 bed capacity. Medical Education Secretary D.K. Tewari disclosed that from 343 in the first week of April, ICU bed capacity had increased to 770 and would be further enhanced to 900 by the end of the week.

The total oxygen beds will be increased from 1,500 to 1,800 this week and further to 2,000, he disclosed.



With 15 deaths, some Gurugram hospitals stop operations amid oxygen shortage

Gurugram: Nearly 15 critical Covid-19 patients have lost their lives due to acute shortage of oxygen in smaller hospitals of Gurugram during the last week. These hospitals regularly demand from the district administration through Twitter or other social media platforms to provide liquid oxygen to them.

According to the hospital management, several of them have discharged all patients and shut down operations, claiming the administration and the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) have not paid attention to their repeated requests for liquid oxygen.

Ashok Kathuria, Director of Kathuria hospital in Old Gurugram, said, "Due to shortage of oxygen four Covid-19 patients had died in the hospital. Now we have stopped admission of new Covid patients as we cannot risk someone's life and why should we face the families' anger without any mistake on our part."

Park Group of hospitals tweeted on Sunday that liquid oxygen allocated to it in Gurugram was hijacked by some other hospital.

"More than 140 patients' lives are in danger," it tweeted.

Later, the hospital tweeted

that it has received less than one tonne of oxygen.

Meanwhile, the administration officials claimed that there was no shortage of liquid oxygen in Gurugram. Aryan Hospital located on Old Railway Road, Gurugram, tweeted that it has sought officials' intervention to provide oxygen at the hospital but to no avail.

Bharat, Medical Superintendent, SPES hospital, said the hospital has stopped fresh admissions of Covid patients as they have not received a single oxygen cylinder. In the absence of continuous oxygen supply, we ask families of indoor patients to arrange for oxygen cylinders to continue their treatment.

"Without oxygen how can we run operations? Why should we face people's anger without any mistake on our part. The district management and the MCG are responsible for allocation of oxygen supply in Gurugram," said a senior doctor of a leading hospital requesting anonymity.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar chaired a meeting to discuss oxygen allocation for Gurugram hospitals. Khattar assured smooth oxygen supply to all hospitals in the district.

NMC starts telecounselling service for Covid patients

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) has activated 24 hours tele-counselling service for Covid-19 patients through its helpline no 1800 200 8701.

Mayor of North Delhi Jai Prakash informed that the civic body has introduced consultation from Ayurvedic doctors. However, residents can also take consultations from Allopathic doctor as well.

"All one need to do is to dial a helpline number and press 4 after that to get connected with doctors," he said, adding that in cases of consultation required with allopathic doctors of Hindu Rao Medical College, one can press 3 after dialing helpline.

The mayor said since a large section of people, believe in Ayurveda system of medicine and treatment, North DMC has extended this service in addition to Allopathy.

"It is an important step towards providing consultations to the Covid patients who are under treatment especially at home and their attendants or their family members who are in trauma due to the pandemic. This helpline would certainly help in relieving their trauma and guide them

towards the right line of treatment either in Allopathic or Ayurvedic system of treatment and medicine," he added.

Municipal Commissioner, Sanjay Goel said that the tele-counselling would be done by the senior faculty of Hindu Rao Medical College for Allopathic system of medicine, while senior Ayush doctors practicing in Ayurveda would respond to the queries of citizens as per their choice.

"Their rich experience and knowledge would help in treating the patients and their family members of the corona and mental trauma of the disease," he said.

Jai Prakash further said that the civic body started covid helpline number 1800-200-8701 for the convenience of the citizens where they can get information related to covid testing centre, vaccination centre, hospital, covid care centre, isolation centre, lifting of bio-medical waste, cremation/ burial ground and queries related to requirement of sanitization.

Now, this helpline as tele-counselling tool is real source of authentic information regarding line of treatment of disease and cure trauma through various branch of medicine and treatment, he said.

SOS calls of Delhi hosps for supply of Oxygen

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Faced with shortage of Oxygen, some hospitals in Delhi on Monday sent out desperate SOS calls to authorities to replenish their dwindling stocks. AAP national spokesperson Raghav Chadha responded to calls and provided immediate help to save many lives.

The AAP leader also appealed to the Centre to ensure delivery of Oxygen to Delhi.

Replying to SOS call of Irene Hospital situated in Kalkaji, he tweeted "It has been taken care of. We have earmarked 8 D-type oxygen cylinders to IRENE Hospital from our Rajghat Response Point.

As our oxygen reserves are quickly depleting, we urge Centre to ensure that committed oxygen supply to Delhi is delivered."

The hospital in the message said that it was left with one hour of Oxygen and 27 of patients are on Oxygen support and seven on high flow supply. Similarly, Chadha provided

four D-type oxygen cylinders from our Rajghat Response point to Dharamveer Solanki MultiSpeciality Hospital (Rohini) and averted any tragedy.

"We are in touch with the hospital administration and have allocated four D-type oxygen cylinders from our Rajghat Response Point. We shall spare no effort to address each and every SOS. But we at the Delhi Govt are raising #SOS too. Please give us our allocated share of oxygen," he said in a tweet.

The AAP leader also made available 10 D-type oxygen cylinders to IBS Hospital in Lajpat Nagar who was running out of Oxygen and lives of 37 were on stake.

"We have rushed 10 D-type oxygen cylinders from our SOS reserves to IBS hospital in Lajpat Nagar, which would help them tide over the crisis. Sincerely hope that with the intervention of judiciary, the Centre will finally be charitable enough to give Delhi its share of oxygen," he tweeted.

Racket involved in OCM blackmarketing busted in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of four persons, the Delhi Police has busted a racket of black marketing of oxygen concentrator machines (OCM) which is required for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Police said that a total of 115 OCMs were recovered from the possession of the accused.

The accused have been identified as Anuj Jain (40) and his brother Anil Jain, a resident of Janakpuri, Shekhar Kumar (37), a resident of West Sagarpur area and Keshav Chaudhary, resident of Vaishali Extension.

According to Rajiv Ranjan Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outernorth district, police received specific inputs that one Anuj Jain was selling oxygen concentrator machines on higher price and was involved in profiteering.

"Thereafter, head constable Arun Kumar was sent as a decoy customer to purchase the



machine. He found Anuj, along with Shekhar Kumar, was inside a car at Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar," said the DCP.

"During interrogation, the accused Anuj agreed to sell one oxygen concentrator machine for Rs 1,10,000 and accepted Rs 5,000 as a token money, following which police apprehended both the accused persons. Later, Chaudhary was also arrested," said the DCP.

"The accused persons operating a godown at

Janakpuri which was found locked. The godown was searched at the instance of Anuj and his brother Anil was found present inside the locked premises with oxygen concentrators," said the DCP.

"Anil was also arrested by Delhi Police Crime Branch in 2017 for changing old currency note worth Rs 5 crore. A total of 115 oxygen concentrator, two cars and Rs 4,90,000 cash were recovered from their possession," the DCP added.

Private company to manage oxygen supply chain in Gurugram

Gurugram : To fix accountability of oxygen supply in Gurugram, the district administration has roped in Vplak India, a professional company which manages supply chain of e-commerce companies like Amazon and Flipkart, to make supply of oxygen cylinder smooth in Gurugram.

Gurugram Divisional Commissioner Rajeev Ranjan recently held a meeting with Ravinder Yadav of Vplak India and Pradeep Aggarwal, an Artificial Intelligence expert.

Ranjan said that presently there is no accounting of oxygen cylinders as many people are taking cylinders, majority of which are not returned. There are reports that some people are storing these cylinders.

He said that bar coding of oxygen cylinders may be done so that while distributing cylinders, mobile numbers and Adhaar number of the person receiving cylinder can be taken.

"If any cylinder does not come for refilling in 48 hours, then the details of receiver person

would be sent to Call Centre, from where a call will be made to him or her. If he or she still requires oxygen then it would be got filled up, otherwise he or she would be asked to return the cylinder, so that it can be given to another needy patient," Ranjan said, adding that the company officials asked to devise a mechanism for proper utilisation of available resources "Ranjan also said that the district administration would be requiring more number of doctors and paramedical staff for additional facilities and for replacement of doctors who have themselves become covid positive." The district administration is looking for specialists in medicine, chest specialist, pulmonology, anaesthesia and other MBBS doctors who are willing to provide their services for covid-19 patients. Besides retired paramedical staff is also required. We urged the persons having above specialities to come forward and get themselves registered with the district administration," Ranjan added. SR

Delhi Police provide medical aid to hosps, care centres

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Leaving no stone unturned to provide assistance to the needy, the Delhi Police has released lifesaving injections, medicines, oxygen and equipment like oxygen concentrators to hospitals and care centers for use by needy patients in the National Capital.

According to police, so far 86 remdisivir injections, used for critical care in high lungs infection, have been released to hospitals that include Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, BSA Hospital, Deepchand Bandhu Hospital, Park Hospital, Kailash Hospital, CDMO, Terapant Chhatarpur, Rohini Covid Care Center and DDMA North.

"Around 90 Fabipiravur tablets have been given to Deepchand Bandhu Hospital by order of the District Commissioner (DC) of North. Over 100 remdisivir injections are under process of release, awaiting orders from authorities

concerned," said Chinmoy Biswal, the Public Relation Officer (PRO) of Delhi Police.

"Police have also released 70 oxygen cylinders to institutions that include the official in charge of DDMA West district, CDMO Terapant Ansari Hospital, World Brain Centre Hospital, Aarya Hospital, Bhagat Chandra Hospital in south west district. 140 oxygen cylinders freshly seized are in the process of release," said Biswal.

"Around 170 Oxygen concentrators seized by north district police have been released to AIIMS (60), CAPF Hospital (40) and Covid Care Centres while over 100 concentrators seized by Outer North district and others are in the process of release. In the same manner, 66 Oxygen flow meters, 24 oxygen regulators and 63 pulse oxymeters have been released. 18 oxygen pumps and 28 oxygen flow meters are in the pipeline for release," said Biswal.

O2 distribution increased in all districts, says Haryana CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Monday said that the quantity of oxygen distribution in the state has been increased and at present, oxygen is being supplied to all districts as per the requirement.

Now, after ensuring supply of oxygen in the hospitals, the State Government is trying to ensure that the facility of providing oxygen individually should also be made available to the patients as per the consultation of the doctor, said the Chief Minister while presiding over a review meeting in Palwal district.

Khattar on Monday visited four districts namely Rewari, Palwal, Nuh and Fatehabad to take stock of the health infrastructure and supply of medical oxygen.

He said that teams of officers have been formed in all the districts to ensure uninterrupted supply of oxygen in all the hospitals.

He directed the officers concerned to continuously conduct the audit regarding availability of bed and oxygen in the districts.

Khattar said that the oxygen quota of the state has been enhanced. On April 22, the state's oxygen quota was enhanced from 156 MT to 162 MT, while this quota has been further enhanced to 257 MT.

Haryana Government has set up a state level control room to monitor oxygen supply in the state. Besides this, six PSA technology based plants are ready in Faridabad, Sonapat, Karnal, Ambala, Panchkula and Hisar. Out of these, production has started from Sonapat plant and production will start in 3-4 days at the remaining plants, he added.

Free Covid...

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Chouhan was told in the meeting that 12,072 new positive cases have come up in the state. The number of people who have recovered is 13,408. Those who have recovered include 1506 from different hospitals, 706 from Covid Care Centers and 11,197 in home isolation. As many as 14,088 oxygen beds are available in government hospitals in the state. Of these, 11,891 are occupied. Out of 10,837 oxygen beds in the private sector, 9,390 beds are full.

About 14,472 isolation

beds and one thousand 375 oxygen beds are available in Government Covid Care Centers and 621 isolation and 68 oxygen beds are available in private sector Covid Centers. Nearly 28 per cent isolation beds and 61 percent oxygen beds in Government Covid Care Center are full. In the Covid Care Centers of the private sector, 22 percent isolation beds and 85 percent oxygen beds are full. The work of laying new oxygen pipeline in 42 district hospitals in the state is in progress at a rapid pace. Out of a total of 2,302 oxygen points, 1,558 have been completed. Construction work of the remaining is going on at a fast pace. Similarly, the work of laying oxygen pipeline in 51 community health centers of the state is also being done at a rapid pace.

Chandigarh shops selling non-essential items to shut for week

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With the Covid-19 cases hitting a high almost everyday, the UT Administration on Monday ordered to shut all the shops selling non-essential items for a week in Chandigarh from 5 pm on Tuesday.

Officials said that the night curfew will continue from 6 pm to 5 am every day and total weekend curfew on Saturday and Sunday will continue. Crowded places like Sukhna Lake, Museums, Libraries, Rock Garden will remain closed. While there will be no restriction on inter-state movement, those entering Chandigarh without negative Covid-19 reports or vaccine

certificates will be subject to random testing.

These decisions were taken by UT Administrator, VP Singh Badnore after reviewing the covid situation in a Special War Room meeting here. The meeting was attended by Manoj Parida, Adviser to the Administrator, Arun Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary Home and Sanjay Beniwal, DGP, KK Yadav, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Mandip Singh Brar, Deputy Commissioner.

In the meeting, there was a detailed discussion regarding restrictive steps taken by the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana including lockdown measures to prevent spread of infection. Chandigarh

being the common capital of Punjab and Haryana, it was also felt that a total lockdown for a long period will adversely affect the economy and may also lead to migration of labourers from the city, thereby causing massive disruption. Badnore asked the health authorities that beds' capacity in medical institutions should be enhanced to accommodate the increasing number of covid patients. A Special Task Force should be constituted under Principal Secretary Health to ensure proper auditing of the fatalities taking place in Sector 16, 32 and 48 hospitals. This will help the Administration to improve and take corrective measures in indoor medical treatment.

BIGGEST SINGLE DAY SPIKE WITH 890 CASES IN CHANDIGARH, 11 DEATHS

Showing no respite, the pandemic continued to surge in Chandigarh on Monday, with 890 people testing positive, up from the previous all-time high of 860 recorded just a day back. Eleven more patients succumbed to the virus in the city taking the death toll to 507. The total caseload was recorded at 45,196 while the active cases were 7943 till the evening, stated Chandigarh's health bulletin.

In the last 24 hours, six women and five men died due to Covid-19. As per the health bulletin, 466 male and 424 female residents were tested positive in the last 24 hours. A maximum of 79 cases were reported in Manimajra followed by 29 cases each in Sector 40 and Sector 37. So far, 4.16 lakh samples have been tested in the city in which 3911 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours.

SII CEO: Cannot ramp up jab production overnight



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

States seem to have to wait smore to get the adequate supply of vaccines, particularly Covishield with its manufacturer Adar Poonawalla of Serum Institute of India (SII) on Monday categorically stating that his firm cannot ramp up production overnight as vaccine making is a specialised process.

The statement of Poonawalla comes days after he had said that due to “pressure and aggression” for him and his family temporarily leaving the country for the UK, as “everyone wants the vaccine to be available in the quickest possible time.” This is likely to impact the vaccination drive that was kicked off from May 1 to cover 18 + population i.e. about 60 crore people.

In a statement here, Poonawalla said that it has orders from the Government to supply 11 crore more doses over the next few months on top of 15 crore already supplied, Poonawalla said. He further said that another 11 crore doses will be supplied to



states and private hospitals in the next few months. “We have got all kinds of support, be it scientific, regulatory and financial. As of today, we received total orders of over 26 crore doses, of which we supplied more than 15 crore doses. We have also got 100 per cent advance of Rs 1,732.5 crore by the GOI for the next tranche of 11 crore doses in the next few months,” he said.

Earlier in the day, the Union Ministry of Health said that 11 crore doses of Covishield are to come from SII during May, June and July. Another 5 crore doses of Covaxin have been ordered from Bharat Biotech India Ltd for the same months.

Poonawalla, however, did not give a timeline for supplying the vaccines. Pune-based SII can produce 6-7 crore doses a month and is reportedly planning to ramp up production to 10 crore by

July. Though the Centre has among various steps opened up vaccination for all above 18 years from May 1, the procurement of jabs has been left to states and private hospitals. This has led to state after state rushing to SII, which can meet only a small part of the demand.

Serum is licensed to manufacture COVID shots from AstraZeneca Plc and Novavax Inc. But so far, the government has approved only AstraZeneca’s Covishield vaccine for use. The Government has also approved the homegrown Covaxin vaccine of Bharat Biotech. Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine too has been approved for emergency use.

SII CEO Poonawalla, who is currently in London, said the population of India is huge and to produce enough doses for all adults is not an easy task.

IAF airlifts O2 from Germany to ease Indians’ breathing



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the tempo of airlifting the much-needed oxygen from abroad, an aircraft of the IAF flew non-stop for 12 hours to bring home oxygen from Frankfurt, Germany. The C-17 transport plane ferried four empty cryogenic containers from there and landed at the Hindan airbase, Ghaziabad. Similarly, another C-17 aircraft airlifted 450 oxygen cylinders from Brize Norton in the UK to the Chennai airbase in Tamil Nadu. In the

past few days, the IAF planes carried out numerous sorties to ferry the containers from Singapore, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

An Italian air force transport plane landed here on Monday with a team of medical experts, oxygen generation plant and ventilators to help India fight the pandemic. The oxygen generation system capable of supplying the gas to the entire hospital will be deployed at the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) hospital in Greater Noida.

Covid-orphaned kids adoption appeals alarm child rights body

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Alarmed at various requests appearing on social media such as twitter regarding the adoption of kids whose parents have died due to Covid-19, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has warned the common citizens/NGOs to refrain from doing so and written to States and Union Territories, urging them to inform child protection authorities about such orphans.

“The commission has been made aware of instances where it has been seen that many NGOs are advertising about the children who have become orphans after losing both their parents to Covid-19,” NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo has written to chief secretaries across the States in a letter.

He said that “in such a sad situation of the surge in Covid-19 cases in the country there are situations arising where the child has lost both its parents or is found to be abandoned. It may be noted that the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 provides for the procedure to be followed for children who have lost their family support and have become children in need of care and protection.”



The missive followed complaints that a few NGOs and individuals had been on their own on the social platforms like twitter and WhatsApp urging people to help such kids “get a new life and spread the word,” while sharing their contact numbers.

The procedure under the JJ Act, 2015 ensures that children are provided all the minimum standards of care and their rights are upheld and protected, Kanoongo said.

“Therefore, it is of utmost importance that these children who have lost their family support must be produced before the child protection authorities of the district, and information about these children must be shared with the

authorities”

He also pointed out that it was necessary for every individual, entity, organisation or NGO to ensure that any information received about orphaned and abandoned children during these Covid times is shared on the helpline 1098.

“Similarly, it is further requested that if any such information for an abandoned or orphaned children is received by any entity, organisation, NGO then the same can be also be informed to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights either through email (cp.Ncpcr@nic.in) or through telephone (011-23478250) for assistance and help to the children,” the letter said.

MHA orders 5,000 paramilitary officials’ deployment in J&K for law and order

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has ordered deployment of 50 additional companies (5,000 personnel) of the Central paramilitary forces in Jammu and Kashmir to augment law and order security grid in the Union Territory from May 7. The move comes after a request to the effect was made J&K DGP through a letter on April 27 and it was approved by the Centre the next day.

The mobilisation is being made “for augmentation of existing deployment grid to effectively manage law and order and security duties.”

On the decision for



deployment of the 50 Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) or Central paramilitary companies, the order said, “The matter has been considered in this Ministry, it has been decided to provide 50 companies of CAPF (CRPF-20, BSF-10, SSB-10, ITBP-05 and CISF-05 com-

panies) to Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir by May 7.

“The UT Administration of Jammu & Kashmir is requested to work out the detailed deployment plan in consultation with the respective CAPFs and the deployment of the CAPFs companies

may be made only after completing the mandatory quarantine period to break the chain of coronavirus, reads the order issued on April 28.

Keeping in view the Covid-19 situation, the Home Ministry advised the Jammu and Kashmir administration to take necessary transportation/logistics/accommodation and other arrangements required in connection with deployment of the CAPFs within the UT, as per the Government guidelines on the subject. The deployment of the additional paramilitary personnel will be organised by UT Administration, added the copy of the order.

Presently, 60 battalions of the CRPF and 10 battalions of other CAPFs are deployed on the ground in the Union Territory for law and order as also for the security duty roles, sources said. The additional troops are likely to be also used for the conduct of the Amarnath Yatra, they added.

‘Erring’ cops booked in ISRO spy case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday said it has registered a case in connection with the “ISRO spy case” in compliance to a Supreme Court order of April 15 this year for taking action against the erring police officers who allegedly framed scientist S Nambi Narayanan in a false espionage case.

Earlier, the case was registered by Kerala Police on October 20, 1994, as Crime No. 225/94 at Police Station Vanchiyoor, Trivandrum against a Maldivian National under Foreigner’s Act on the allegations of overstaying in India after the expiry of the visa.

Subsequently, another case as Crime No. 246/1994 dated November 13, 1994, was also registered at Vanchiyoor Police station under Official Secrets



Act 1923 and Section 34 (common intention) of IPC against two accused Maldivian nationals on the allegations that they, in collusion with some others, had taken part in the activities against the sovereignty and integrity of India and indulged in other activities which would harm the cordial relations of India with its neighbours.

Later, the investigation of both the said cases was entrusted to a SIT of Kerala police. In Crime no. 246/1994, besides said two accused, four more persons including two scientists working at Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) of ISRO were arrested on the charges of espionage

activities.

Further, the investigation of both these cases was transferred to CBI. In the Espionage case, CBI submitted Final Report (charge sheet) before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ernakulam (Kerala) which was accepted by the Court. While submitting the said report in the Espionage case, the allegations pertaining to espionage were found to be false. One of the scientists S Nambi Narayanan took the matter for taking action against the erring officials to the apex court by way of filing a civil writ petition.

The SC, in its judgement dated September 14, 2018 in the Civil Appeal No. 6637-6638/2018, awarded compensation of Rs 50 lakh to Narayanan on several counts and also ordered the consti-

tution of a Committee, for obtaining actual scenario including arrest, false implication of the said scientist and to find out ways for taking appropriate steps against the erring officials, the CBI said.

Accordingly, a Committee under the Chairmanship of a retired judge of the SC, was constituted by the Union Home Ministry, it said.

The Committee, after conducting inquiry, submitted its report before the apex court. Based on the said enquiry report, the SC through an order on April 15 directed the CBI to proceed in the matter in accordance with law, being a Court directed enquiry.

“Accordingly, as per the directions of Hon’ble Supreme Court, CBI has registered a case,” the agency said in a statement.

Jaishankar rebuts Jairam over oxygen ‘shortage’ in Embassies

IAN5 ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday took on the Congress, which had attempted to project that the Central Government had collapsed and foreign embassies were reaching out to the Opposition for help with their Covid-19 medical emergencies.

On Sunday, the New Zealand Embassy in New Delhi tweeted an SOS tagging youth leaders of the Congress, saying, “Could you please help with oxygen cylinder urgently at the New Zealand High Commission? Thank you.”

Youth Congress president BV Srinivas responded to the request and tweeted an hour later saying, “We have reached New Zealand High Commission with oxygen

cylinders. Please open the gates and save a soul on time.”

However, the New Zealand Embassy apologised soon after, saying, “We are trying all sources to arrange for oxygen cylinders urgently and our appeal has unfortunately been misinterpreted, for which we are sorry.”

The apology came after Jaishankar rebutted Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who had on Saturday accused the Government of being completely dysfunctional and unresponsive towards medical emergency at the Philippines Embassy.

On Saturday, the Indian Youth Congress had tweeted a video claiming that its members were providing medical emergency services at the Embassy of the Philippines in

New Delhi.

Ramesh tweeted the video, saying, “While I thank @IYC for its stellar efforts, as an Indian citizen I’m stunned that the youth wing of the opposition party is attending to SOS calls from foreign embassies. Is the MEA sleeping @DrJaishankar?”

To this, Jaishankar tweeted on Sunday morning, “MEA checked with the Philippines Embassy. This was an unsolicited supply as they had no Covid cases. Clearly for cheap publicity by you know who. Giving away cylinders like this when there are people in desperate need of oxygen is simply appalling. Jairamji, MEA never sleeps; our people know across the world. MEA also never fakes; we know who does.”

Congress: Central Vista essential service, but jab will come in July, is this joke?



IAN5 ■ NEW DELHI

Reacting to reports of the Central Vista as essential service, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara has attacked the Union Government and raised questions about the vaccines.

Addressing a Press conference on Monday Khara said, “Central Vista is an essential service, amid this pandemic in the Capital where thousands are dying every day, lakhs are suffering and struggling for hospital beds, for oxygen, for medicines, in the same capital city, the Central Vista is an essential service, but the vaccine will come in July, is that a joke?”

He said over the last 15 days, the tragedies in the hospitals that we have all witnessed in Delhi, which is the capital city, a few kilometres from the Central Vista, hospitals are pleading through social media, through media, they are pleading, begging for oxygen.

“Is the vaccine available? We

The Congress demanded auditing and distribution of foreign aid like injections, oxygen

have been told by the manufacturers that it wouldn’t be available before July. I don’t want to remind Hon’ble Prime Minister what he said in January at the World Economic Forum that by August, 300 million people would be vaccinated,” he said.

The Congress demanded auditing and distribution of foreign aid like injections, oxygen and other drugs. “We request and demand from the Government, every day, please make public, share it with every Indian, where has this aid come from, where is it going -- which state, which hospital, which agency,” he said.



Fourth consignment of medical supplies containing 60 ventilators arrives from UK

PTI

FICN racketeer held from Bengal gets 6 years in jail

IAN5 ■ NEW DELHI

A special NIA court in Kerala’s Ernakulam on Monday sentenced a fake Indian currency note (FICN) racketeer to six years rigorous imprisonment besides imposing a fine in connection with the Thrissur FICN case.

An NIA spokesperson said here that the special court for NIA cases in Ernakulam convicted Ali Hossain aka Mohammed Ali Hossain, 30, a resident of Murshidabad district in West Bengal, under several sections of the Indian Penal Code in a 2018 FICN case and sentenced him to six years rigorous imprisonment besides imposing a fine of Rs 85,000 on him for his role in procuring, possessing and circulating FICN in Kerala.

The official said that a case



was originally registered at the Thrissur East police station on August 19, 2018 against Hossain following the seizure of two FICNs of Rs 2,000 denomination from his possession.

Based on Hossain’s interrogation, 101 fake notes of Rs 2,000 face value each were recovered from his residence in Palakkad district.

NIA had taken over the case on October 27, 2018.

The official said that investigation had revealed that in 2018, Hossain had conspired with accused Alim Sheikh, a Bangladeshi national who is absconding, to smuggle FICN into Kerala, with an intention to use the same as genuine Indian currency for unlawful gains.

MHA seeks report from Bengal Govt on post-poll violence

IAN5 ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Monday sought a report from the West Bengal Government on the post election violence in the State targeting Opposition political workers.

The Home Ministry in a letter to the West Bengal Chief Secretary has asked him to submit a detailed report on the violence that broke out in parts of the state on Sunday evening even as trends and results from the Assembly election were pouring in.

The houses and vehicles of some Bharatiya Janata Party candidates were allegedly attacked and a party office at

Arambagh was set on fire. The vehicle of Suwendu Adhikari, who defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram, was also reportedly attacked.

“MHA has asked West Bengal Government for a report on the post election violence targeting opposition political workers in the state,” the Home Ministry Spokesperson tweeted.

After the violence, Trinamool Congress leaders, however, said they had nothing to do with any such incidents in West Bengal and urged people to maintain peace and follow Covid-19 protocols.

At Natabari, the car of BJP

candidate Mihir Goswami was learnt to be damaged after the Election Commission announced his victory from Natabari in north Bengal defeating Rabindranath Ghosh, minister and senior TMC leader.

A BJP party office at Arambagh was set ablaze where the party’s candidate Madhusudan Bag defeated TMC’s Sujata Mondal by around 7,100 votes.

At Siuri, a BJP office was ransacked and the local party leader’s tractor was set ablaze.

A similar incident was reported from Kolkata’s Belegghata constituency where a BJP candidate’s garage was set on fire.

Pak targets BSF patrol party, shatters peace

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Shattering peace prevailing along the 194 km long international border between India and Pakistan across Jammu frontier, the Pakistani rangers early Monday morning targeted a BSF patrol party in the Ramgarh sub sector of Samba by opening 'unprovoked' firing on them.

This is the first incident of 'unprovoked' firing on the Indian border guards after both India and Pakistan had renewed their mutually brokered ceasefire agreement from the midnight of February 24-25.

Luckily, the BSF patrol party escaped unhurt. Official sources in the BSF confirmed, "no loss of life/injury was reported on ground zero".

According to official sources, "early Monday morning Pakistani rangers stationed at one of the Pak post 'Tipu' and 'Hussain' fired around 20 rounds of small weapons targeting the working party of BOP Majra near mount no 8/36 pillar no 81". In response, BSF jawans exercised utmost restraint but maintained a close watch on the activities of the Pak rangers.

After gathering inputs and making preliminary assessment of the ground situation, PRO BSF, DIG SPS Sandhu, Jammu frontier in a formal statement claimed, "Pakistani r a n g e r s resorted to 'unprovoked' firing at 06:15 a.m in Ramgarh sector on BSF patrolling party ahead of fencing." No loss of life/injury was reported, he added.



Interestingly, the Ramgarh sector was witnessing hectic activity for the last couple of weeks.

On March 16, 2021 alert BSF jawans had killed a Pakistani intruder in the same sector after he refused to retrieve inside the Pak territory and kept advancing towards the Indian side.

Several aeroplane shaped balloons with PLA written on it were also recovered from agricultural fields in the Hiranagar, Arnai and RS Pura sectors of Jammu frontier.

Meanwhile, local villagers in the border areas were living peacefully for the last two months and focusing on harvesting their wheat crops standing in the fields.

Local civilians bore the maximum brunt of cross border firing in the past and were leading peaceful lives since the past more than two months in the forward areas.

Yogi Govt to launch mega testing drive in villages

Lucknow: In order to prevent Covid surge in the rural areas in Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath Government is going to launch a mega testing campaign for Covid infection in all the revenue villages of the state from May 5.

The Chief Minister, while presiding over a high-level Covid review meeting, said that the rural areas have been a matter of huge concern and we have to protect the villages from the Covid spread.

To curb the Covid numbers in rural areas, the government has decided to ramp up testing in around 97,409 revenue villages of 75 districts.

The focus is to contain the spread of the infections in rural areas. "We have to protect villages from Covid infection at any cost. There is a need for special vigilance in the villages. In such a situation, a massive campaign of Covid testing should be conducted in all the 97,409 revenue villages of the state", he directed.

The initiative starting from May 4, aims to drive down Covid-19 rates and transmission in the rural areas by identifying positive cases. The Chief Minister has asked the officials to make all the necessary preparations.



The number of RRTs (Rapid Response Teams) should be increased to check Covid spread in the villages of each district. Members of RRTs should make door-to-door visits and check body temperatures, record oxygen level and check for other symptoms in people who are into home isolation.

The Chief Minister also ordered the health department to complete preparations for the successful implementation of this large testing drive which will begin from Tuesday.

"We are hoping that the villagers will recognize the benefits of getting tested to help reduce the spread of the virus," said a government spokesman.

Yogi Adityanath asked the officials to seek help from the monitoring committees. Those who are found unwell or those who tested positive, should be given treatment according to Covid medical protocols. **IANS**

Frightening pictures from hospitals exposing tall claims of UP CM: Akhilesh

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday accused the ruling BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh of remaining in "isolation" and said the frightening pictures coming from hospitals are exposing the tall claims of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"The BJP government did nothing in past four years and remained in isolation due to which it has put entire state in isolation now. The tall claims of Adityanath is exposed in frightening pictures and videos coming from hospitals daily," Yadav said in a statement here.

He also questioned the work being done by chief minister's 'Team-9', saying that in some cases, entire families are COVID-19 positive and no one is there to take care of them. The SP leader also alleged that alive people are being declared dead in hospitals.

"There is no proper supply of oxygen and no beds in hospitals. Hundreds of people are dying due to mismanagement and BJP government is responsible both administratively and morally," Yadav said, adding that such irresponsible government is of no use to people.

Parents abandon body of 2-month-old Covid+ baby in Jammu hospital

Jammu: In a shocking incident, parents of a 2-month-old dead Covid positive baby abandoned the body at a hospital in Jammu district and fled, an official said on Monday.

S.M.G.S. Hospital Medical Superintendent, Dr Dara Singh, said the parents ran away from the hospital. "The baby was admitted to the hospital on Sunday with congenital heart disease and other problems. The baby, who had tested positive for Covid-19, expired and the parents were told to test themselves for the virus. Instead of testing themselves or taking the dead baby's body, the parents ran away from the hospital," he said.

"Our efforts to trace them have failed so far and we have kept the body in the hospital mortuary. **IANS**

Maha deaths drop to 567

N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a relief to the health authorities, the number of Covid 19-triggered deaths in Maharashtra dropped further to 567 on Monday, while the state logged 48,621 new infections.

A day after the state recorded 669 deaths and 56,647 new cases, the daily deaths dropped by 102 while the infections came down by 8026.

The drop in the number of daily deaths in the state should be seen in the context of the fact that the daily deaths had gone up to 10-35 on April 28, while the state witnessed 802 deaths on May 1 and 669 deaths on May 2. With 567 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed from 70,284 to 70,851. Similarly, with 48,621 infections, the total number of cases rose from 47,22,401 to 47,71,022.

As 59,500 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 40,41,158. The recovery rate in the state for the first time in several days rose from 84.31 per cent to 84.7 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state dropped from 6,68,353 to 6,56,870 cases. The fatality rate in the state stood static at

1.49 per cent.

With 78 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 13,294 to 13,372,

while the infected cases went up by 2624 to trigger a jump in the infections from 6,55,997 to 6,58,621.

Mumbai BMC chief urges people to come forward for Covid testing

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Concerned by the sudden decrease in the number of Covid-19 tests being conducted in the metropolis, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal on Monday appealed to the citizens in the city to come forward to get tested so that "a minimum of 40,000 tests are done every day" in the country's commercial capital.

In an appeal made on a day when the number of daily Covid-19 tests dropped to 23,542 as against 56,000 tests done in a single day the metropolis last month, Chahal said: "It has been the consistent policy of MCGM to do maximum testing to flush out Corona virus from Mumbai's environment".

"Our highest single day testing from March 2020 till 10th Feb 10, 2021 when second pandemic wave hit Mumbai was 24,500," the civic chief said.

"However, immediately thereafter our testing was more than doubled & touched 56000 tests on a single day in April 2021. Our average daily testing in the month of April 21 was nearly 44000 per day," Chahal said.

"It has been observed that the testing figures have fallen in last few days from 50,000 plus to 38000 day before & 28,000 yesterday. It's likely to fall further during weekends," the civic chief said in the morning.

As per the Covid-19 update released by the Birhanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the number of Covid-19 tests done on a single day dropped to 23,542 on Monday.

"Our aggressive testing policy has resulted in reduction of the positivity rate. This might have reduced the natural demand for home collection of swabs by our citizens in the last few days," Chahal said.

J&K records 51 deaths on Mon

Jammu: The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Monday recorded 51 deaths, highest so far in one single day while 3,733 new cases of coronavirus tested positive taking the tally of active positive cases closer to 35,000 cases.

According to a media bulletin, only 11 Covid ICU beds have been left vacant in GMC, Jammu, four in Chest Diseases Hospital, 20 in Gandhi Nagar hospital, three in ASCOMS Hospital. The situation in Srinagar is no different. As per the media bulletin, only 1 Covid ICU bed was vacant in SMHS hospital in Srinagar, 2 in SKIMS, Soura.

Meanwhile, there has been no let up in the total number of new cases. On May 3 out of

3733 new positive cases 1294 were reported from Jammu division and 2439 from Kashmir division.

The death toll due to Covid 19 touched 2421 after 35 deaths were reported from Jammu division and 16 from Kashmir division.

Moreover, 1536 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals including 626 from Jammu Division and 910 from Kashmir Division.

Both the capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu continue to record the highest tally of positive cases despite observing corona curfew. On Monday, Srinagar recorded 1136 cases taking the tally of active positive cases to 10,143. **PNS**

TN CM Palaniswami resigns

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami submitted his Government's resignation to Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Monday morning as a follow up to the Election Commission of India declaring the results of the Legislative Assembly election held on April 6.

M K Stalin, president of the DMK, who led his party as well as the Secular Front to an impressive win in the election would be sworn in as the next Chief Minister on Friday.

The newly elected MLAs of the DMK are meeting at the party headquarters in Chennai on Tuesday to formally elect Stalin as the leader of the legislative assembly. Stalin had told media persons late Sunday evening that the swearing in would be

held at the Raj Bhavan in Chennai and it would be a simple affair. The mission to ensure a smooth transition of power began late Sunday evening and continued throughout Monday with bureaucrats and police officials calling on Stalin at his palatial residence many times.

In the 234 strong Legislative Assembly, the DMK would have 133 members while the AIADMK with 66 members would don the role of the principal opposition party.

The Indian National Congress, the principal ally of the DMK, won 18 of the 25 seats it contested, while the two Communist parties shared two seats each. The VCK, a Dalit outfit, managed to win four seats. The DMK will not include any of the allies in its government as the party commands a safe and secure strength in the House.

COVID BRIEFS

PUDUCHERRY: LOCKDOWN EXTENDED TILL MAY 10

Puducherry: Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Tamilisai Soundararajan on Monday announced that the lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19 would be extended till May 10. She announced this while speaking to reporters after inaugurating a separate OP booth on the premises of Rajiv Gandhi Government Maternity Hospital here.

ANDHRA LOGS 18,972 FRESH CASES

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh crossed the One million mark in total recoveries of Covid-19 patients even as it added 18,972 fresh cases of the infection in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday. The latest bulletin said 10,227 patients had recovered in 24 hours, taking the gross to 10,03,935.

AHMEDABAD: W RLY SETS UP 19 ISOLATION COACHES

Ahmedabad: The Ahmedabad division of the Western Railway has set up 19 isolation coaches with 304 beds here in Gujarat amid the shortage of beds in hospitals given the surge in COVID-19 cases. Thirteen of these coaches, equipped with required medical facilities including oxygen cylinders, have been stationed at the city's Sabarmati railway station, while six coaches are parked at Chandlodiya railway station, it said on Monday.

5 COVID +VE UNDERTRIALS FLEE FROM HOSP IN JAIPUR

Jaipur: Five Covid-19 positive undertrial prisoners getting treatment at the Chittorgarh District Hospital fled from the facility on Monday, but two of them were nabbed soon afterward, officials said.

SIKKIM: 27 NEW CASES, 1 MORE DEATH

Gangtok: Sikkim's COVID-19 tally rose to 8,468 as 27 more people tested positive for the virus while one new fatality pushed the death toll to 150, a health department bulletin said on Monday. The new COVID-19 cases were reported from East Sikkim district (13), West Sikkim (10) and South Sikkim district (4), it said.

BJP likely to send Central observers to Assam to pick next State CM

New Delhi: The BJP is likely to finalise its choice of Chief Ministerial nominee for Assam in a day or two as internal consultation within the party has begun amid a suspense over whether it will continue with incumbent chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal or bring in a new face.

Sonowal and his powerful ministerial colleague Himanta Biswa Sarma are being seen as the two most obvious contenders for the top job. BJP sources said internal confabulation is on in the party, and the its parliamentary board may soon name central observers to preside over the meeting of its newly-elected party MLAs in Guwahati where they will pick their leader. Central observers generally convey the choice of the party top brass to the state leadership which in turn is endorsed by the

MLAs.

The ruling BJP-led NDA has retained its grip on Assam, bagging 74 of the 126 assembly

constituencies that went to polls, while the opposition Congress-led grand alliance managed to clinch just 50 seats. **PTI**

Assam CM thanks people for victory of BJP-led alliance

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister ASarbananda Sonowal thanked all sections of people for giving a clear mandate to the BJP-led alliance in the assembly election, results of which were declared on Sunday.

Expressing his gratitude to the people belonging to Barak and Brahmaputra valleys, and other parts of the state, the chief minister in a statement on Monday said, they had reposed their faith in

the BJP-led alliance due to its performance in four key areas.

The areas were "development carried out by the BJP-led government which manifested in every nook and corner of the state, its unrelenting fight against corruption, initiatives to strengthen peace and harmony, and committed efforts of the government to safeguard the identity and existence of the Assamese people from the influx which had significantly altered the demography of the state, especially lower Assam", the statement said.

Coordinate with Centre to hike O2 quota: Raj CM to officials

Jaipur: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has instructed officials to maintain constant coordination with the Central Government to increase the allocation of medical oxygen in view of the ever-increasing active cases of Covid in the state. Along with this, he has also directed to strongly advocate for providing tankers as per requirement to Rajasthan out of the oxygen transport tankers being imported through the central government.

The Chief Minister has said strict adherence to the Covid protocol is very important for lifesaving. He instructed that the epidemic red alert starting from Monday should be strictly followed the guidelines of Public Discipline Fortnight, there should not be any laxity in it.

Shri Gehlot was reviewing the supply of oxygen, availability of medicines, Covid condensation and the epidem-



ic Red Alert - Public Discipline Fortnight starting Monday through video conference on Sunday night.

He said that the consumption of oxygen in the state is increasing rapidly due to increasing compaction. Since the central government is allocating oxygen under the National Plan, it is very important to increase the amount of allocation in view of the need of Rajasthan. He said that there has been an additional increase of 350 metric tonnes in the production capacity of oxygen at the Jamnagar plant. In such a situation, Rajasthan gets an allocation of extra oxygen from there.

Aligarh hospital demands ₹8,000 to hand over body

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

During the covid pandemic, it has been seen that the sensitivity of Deendayal Hospital staff is dead. Beena Ghosh, resident of Begambagh, died on April 30, but Rs 8,000 were demanded to hand over the body.

Son Shankar was upset due to lack of money. After the matter went viral on social media, the DM in charge took cognizance and the investigation has been handed over to SDM. After this, the body was also handed over to Shankar.

Bina Ghosh was tested positive on 24 April, the same day she was admitted to the corona ward of Deendayal Upadhyaya Joint Hospital.

Agra residents urged to return empty cylinders

PTI ■ AGRA

Two major NGOs here that have been providing oxygen to Covid patients, have urged their families to return empty cylinders.

About 200 oxygen cylinders and 15 concentrators, provided by the two nonprofit organisations — Shri Chetra Bajaj Committee and Help Agra — are lying with people being treated in home isolation, they told PTI.

"Some people are renting our cylinders further to other people at heavy rates. When we call them, they refuse to return them and tell us to keep the security amount," Shri Chetra Bajaj Committee Spokesperson Nandkishore Goyal said, adding the security amount varied from Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000.

NEW INNINGS IN LOCKDOWN



A married couple on their way to pray at the holy river Ganga amid lockdown in Varanasi on Monday



A bride and bridegroom wearing masks leave after registering their marriage at Bandra court, amid lockdown, in Mumbai, on Monday PTI

MAHA PHONE TAPPING CASE

Rashmi Shukla moves SC, seeks no coercive action against her

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a new development in the much-discussed phone tapping case, senior IPS officer Rashmi Shukla on Monday moved the Bombay High Court, seeking a direction to the Mumbai police not to take any coercive action against her and urging the court for an urgent hearing in the case registered under the Official Secrets Act and other laws for allegedly leaking certain confidential documents.

In a criminal writ petition filed through her advocate Sameer Nangre, Shukla – who is currently Additional Director General (ADG) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) based in Hyderabad – sought a direction to the police to not take any "coercive action" against her. She also sought an urgent heading in the case, as she was apprehending her

arrest in the case.

Shukla's counsel said in the petition: "My client is one of the senior most officers of 1988 cadre in police service for more than 30 years....The approach of the respondent state is to arm-twist the petitioner by bogus and frivolous case".

"The petitioner has exposed the nexus between ministers and politicians and other gross corruption involved in assigning posting to police officers...This reveals courage and integrity of the petitioner in performing her official duties and making her best endeavours to expose and eliminate the corruption by bringing the guilty to books," Nangre stated in the petition.

"Instead of applauding and appreciating the work of the petitioner, the government authorities are involved in framing the petitioner in a false criminal case," the petition

stated.

The petition pertains to an FIR registered by the police at the BKC Cyber Police Station on March 26 based on a complaint filed by the State Intelligence Department (SID) against unknown persons for the alleged illegal phone tapping and invoked sections of the Official Secrets Act, Information Technology Act and Indian Telegraph Act.

Before the BKC police registered an FIR in the phone tapping case, Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte had claimed in a report submitted to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray that "it appears that Ms. Shukla herself had leaked the confidential report (to the former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis)".

On her part, Shukla skipped the summons issued to her to appear before the BKC on April 26 and April 28 for recording her statement in the

case.

It may be recalled that the SID had lodged a lodged a complaint with the police after Maharashtra's former chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis had on March 23 gone to town demanding a CBI inquiry into the alleged racket involving the transfers and promotions of police officers ranging from inspectors to high-ranging IPS officers.

Fadnavis had made his demand based on a confidentially submitted to it in August last year by the then State Intelligence Commissioner Rashmi Shukla through the then the Director-General of Police Subodh Jaiswal on August 25, 2020 allegedly involving corruption in matters relating to the transfers and promotions of police officers ranging from inspectors to high-ranging IPS officers.


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PAPER WITH PASSION

Emphatic victory

The BJP lost the plot when it focused more on damning Mamata than advancing its core agenda

It's a classic case of "glass half full" battle of jibes for both the BJP backers and their critics. For the supporters of the saffron outfit, the victory in Assam and Puducherry and the massive rise in both the vote percentage and the number of seats in West Bengal are a reflection of the BJP's unmatched electoral management and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity. The saffron baiters have their own arguments. They contend that the BJP's victory against the Congress in Assam was predictable because the latter is no more a potent political force. Similarly, in Puducherry, it's the personal victory of All India NR Congress (AINRC) leader N Rangasamy and the BJP has merely benefited from the alliance. But in Bengal, where the real battle of 2021 took place, the BJP came a cropper. After all, it had thrown in everything it had in its ever-growing kitty of resources — political, financial and others. The Prime Minister himself addressed 18 rallies and Home Minister Amit Shah held dozens of massive road shows. Several other Chief Ministers, MPs, MLAs and party president JP Nadda camped in Bengal for months together and tried to create the necessary media buzz to defeat the TMC in the psychological space. Coincidentally, several initiatives of the CBI and the I-T department against the TMC leaders also came in handy for the BJP. Mamata and her supporters also kept alleging that



the Election Commission was acting as a player rather than an arbiter.

On the other hand, Mamata got little support from the anti-BJP bandwagon. Though the Congress-Left alliance threatened to cut into her Muslim votes, a few erstwhile UPA leaders came in to campaign for her. Devoid of any serious policy and programme narratives, the campaign became highly personalised with Modi greeting Mamata with "Didi o Didi" catcalls and the TMC supremo hurling the choicest invectives at Shah. The BJP lost the plot when it focused more on damning Mamata than advancing its core political agenda. The Bengali-identity politics turned out to be far more assertive and lethal for the BJP which didn't realise that lord Ram would not threaten a woman who epitomised goddess Durga for millions of Bengalis. In fact, the more the BJP leaders ridiculed Mamata, the more sympathy she drew from the people of the State. The presence of a leader who could give a face to identity politics cost the saffron party in a big way. Most of the borrowed players — described as "rotten eggs" by Prashant Kishor — were seen as opportunists even by the BJP's own supporters. It's obvious that any cadre-based party can't assimilate such an overnight influx without alienating a section of its own supporters. The lesson for the BJP is loud and clear: Wherever the party is pitched against satraps, it would need to focus more on local issues and identity politics. The record of the last seven years shows that the BJP has not been successful in winning against powerful regional players in the State-level elections.

PICTALK



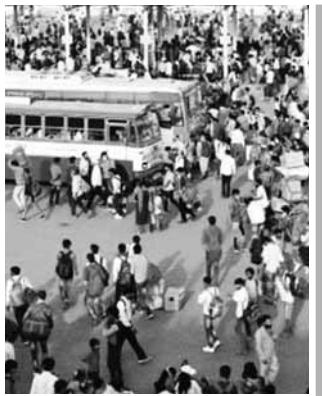
People buy vegetables at a crowded market during the lockdown in Jalandhar

PTI

Crunch time

The Centre must plan meticulously before it agrees to the SC's advice for another lockdown

Devastated by COVID-19's second wave, the nation is anxiously looking for solutions but seemingly can't find any. The Prime Minister, who had last year announced a hard lockdown, is now advocating a "micro-containment" strategy while the Supreme Court recently asked the Centre to consider imposing another lockdown. But considering the ferocity of the second wave — the exponential rise in cases, mounting death toll, shortage of medical oxygen, vaccines and hospital beds — and the loss of crucial time in the conduct of the Assembly elections and the Mahakumbh, the moot question is: Would another lockdown help contain the infection? There has been no significant improvement in Delhi even after a two-week lockdown — now extended for a third week — as the positivity rate continues to be alarmingly high. Further, even if a pan-India lockdown is imposed as a knee-jerk reaction to the court's suggestion, its impact on breaking the transmission chain is debatable. There's no doubt, however, that it would be a death blow to millions of underprivileged citizens already facing an existential crisis. We have seen how the hapless migrant workers again rushed



back home from big cities fearing a lockdown, even before it was announced.

It is the duty of the Centre to make adequate arrangements for the return of these workers if it plans to enforce another lockdown. It must ensure that these people are not stuffed into trains or buses like last year because that would be another super-spreader. A reasonable period, at least two weeks, must be allowed for their safe return before the lockdown is effected. The Government should also transfer some funds via the DBT schemes into their bank accounts. Also, with the Supreme Court observing that no person shall be denied hospitalisation for lack of identity proof, the Centre must now consult States and formulate a national policy within two weeks. The situation is already out of hand and the entire population must be vaccinated as early as possible. With vaccine shortage and an uneven pricing policy haunting the States, getting the desired outcome from the inoculation drive is easier said than done. With reports that the second wave may hit its peak between May 11-16 before declining by May end, we must be prepared for the worst.

Ignoring the warning signs

We were wilfully unprepared for this tsunami of an outbreak of COVID-19, though the telltale marks were all in plain sight

Anybody who has seen videos of the horrific 2004 tsunami that killed an estimated quarter of a million people, and there are several of these on YouTube, might have noticed in some videos that as much as 10-15 minutes before the tsunami actually hit the shore, water had started withdrawing from the beach. The students of middle-school geography will remember that it is taught as a classic warning sign of an impending tsunami; and we are actually taught at a very early age that one needs to find higher ground in such a situation. This lesson is redoubled in many coastal areas. Maybe some people did seek shelter when they noticed this, many did not. Yes, the tsunami might have gotten many of those who escaped anyway; it was so devastating that running away could do only so much. But even if it saved a few lives, the lessons in school would have been worth it.

That was a real tsunami, what we have in India right now is not a second wave of COVID-19 infections. We have an overwhelming tsunami of COVID-19 infections and, in Delhi and in many other cities across India, the healthcare system is overwhelmed. We know that at least 3,500 people are dying every day, at least in official statistics. India is inching up to 2,50,000 deaths and almost every family in Delhi at least knows either a loved one or a close friend who has died from the Coronavirus Tsunami. While the authorities now struggle with managing the situation, we have to start taking into account as to why we all ignored the warning signs.

And these were there. These were there for all of us to see and read about in the news. We knew there was a deadly new British variant doing the rounds; we knew that there was a new "double mutant" variant. Even with limited testing, we knew that there were hotspots emerging in and around Mumbai and Pune. But instead of herding



people to a higher ground and safety, like we should have if this were a real tsunami, we were mesmerised and walked into the exposed seafloor, trying to pick up coral and seashells. We travelled to Goa, crowded planes and airports and instead of managing travel from hotspots like the United Kingdom, or even domestic travel, we "celebrated" the rising numbers of air passengers through tweets. Instead of restricting air travel, either within India, from India or into India, we allowed hundreds of people to come in likely carrying new and exotic variants of the virus. The world, however, is scared of the new variants emerging from India and has pretty much closed its doors to India.

Some of us had read about the sudden rise in cases in Brazil, starting with the Amazonian city of Manaus and spreading across that South American country, and wondered whether India too could see such a tremendously debilitating tsunami of cases. Instead, we were told stories of Indian exceptionalism, how India had beaten



INSTEAD OF UNDERSTANDING WHY INDIA WAS SPARED THE 'FULL' IMPACT OF THE ORIGINAL CORONAVIRUS, WE ROLLED OUT A GRADUAL VACCINE PROGRAMME AND INDEED MADE A SONG AND DANCE ABOUT EXPORTING MILLIONS OF VACCINES ABROAD

back the virus and taking a cue from our leaders, across fields from politics to sports, we all let our guard down. Instead of understanding why India was spared the "full" impact of the original Coronavirus, we rolled out a gradual vaccine programme and indeed made a song and dance about exporting millions of vaccines abroad. Nothing against India's generosity to the world, but maybe here following a more selfish American philosophy might have ensured that more people in India were vaccinated and the death toll from this outbreak might have been less.

Yes, a large majority of those who have died were elderly and had led full lives, and while many of them might have died in this tsunami also, the issue is that a large number of people who died need not have died had the arrangements for more beds and oxygen been made earlier. Yes, the system might still have been overwhelmed, meaning that those who caught the disease early benefited from more resources but if the special COVID-19 hospitals in Delhi and

Mumbai had been established a week earlier, if a proper logistical programme had been thought out for oxygen transport a month earlier, many lives might have been saved. The Government is going around tom-tomming India's "low" COVID-19 Fatality Rate; in fact, with a bit of planning and organisation, it could have been lower still.

The fact of the matter is that we saw the warning signs but chose to ignore these; we all bought into the story of Indian exceptionalism. We blithely chose to ignore what was happening elsewhere in the world and believed that once we all start getting vaccinated, things will get even better. We went ahead and planned for massive religious functions like the Mahakumbh, we had parties on Holi and we put ourselves at risk. We ignored the warning signs, even though these were in plain sight for all of us to see. No wonder, now we find ourselves drowning in a tsunami.

(The author is Managing Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MATCHES ARE AN OASIS THESE DAYS

Sir — The Indian Premier League (IPL) match between archrivals Mumbai Indians (MI) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) recently was a perfect entertainer and certainly the match of this season so far. Kieron Pollard's stunning onslaught took the Mumbai Indians to an improbable win in a run-fest. The defeat also ended the Super Kings' five-match winning streak.

The MI came out with flying colours in a last-ball thriller. With 138 needed from the last 10 overs, they knew there was just one way to go about it and, in Pollard, they found the man to pursue the Herculean task. He muscled Jadeja for three sixes in the 13th over before smashing two more off Lungi Ngidi in the next. By the end of 14 overs, Mumbai were 130 for three. At the same stage in their innings, the Super Kings were 126 for four. Pollard raced away to 50 in 17 balls, the fifth joint-fastest in the IPL, and reduced the equation to 66 required from the last five overs. A match that witnessed an equal number of fours and sixes (30 each) is absolutely a bad memory for the bowlers. Remarkably, both teams displayed true teamwork to arrive at such a mammoth total. But Rayudu and Moeen Ali from CSK and Pollard and Krunal Pandya from MI deserve special applause. Let's hope the richest cash league will offer the best entertainment in the remainder of the series.

Satish Reddy Kanaganti | Nalgonda

IT'S TIME TO BE HOPEFUL, CAREFUL

Sir — Winning over the first wave of COVID-19 was no mean feat for India. Buoyed by it, New Delhi started vaccine diplomacy to help other nations during the crisis. However, things turned upside down as the second wave hit us hard and sent our healthcare system reeling. Some sceptics applaud other countries for beating the second wave and compare it with India's "failure". However, we must keep in mind that we have a huge population and there are several other barriers. Despite all the constraints, our recovery rate is far better and mortality rate is too low. Even the US and Russia, among the developed

BJP should introspect its failure



In the West Bengal Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fell way below its expected number of seats. But in a surprise turn, Mamata Banerjee lost to Suwendu Adhikari, her former party colleague who switched sides months earlier and joined the BJP. It's time for the BJP and its leaders, who were earlier claiming to win more than 200 seats, to introspect about what led to their defeat. In an embarrassment for the BJP, its stalwarts such as Union Minister Babul Supriyo, former Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta and Lok Sabha MP Locket Chatterjee fell like ninepins. The Assembly election

nations with top medical infrastructure, were devastated by the second wave.

The Centre and State Governments are doing their best to fight the pandemic and utilising their resources to the optimum. The services of final-year MBBS students can be utilised for providing services like tele-consultation and monitoring of mild COVID cases after due orientation by and under supervision of faculty. It's time for all of us to work together and overcome the pandemic. The darkness will soon go away if every citizen follows the rules and precautions at individual level.

Aman Jaiswal | New Delhi

TAMIL NADU'S DRAVIDIAN ICONS

Sir — These Tamil Nadu Assembly elections were the first time in the last five decades without the towering presence of the icons of Dravidian politics. This time, the State may well have seen the emergence

result is a dampener for the BJP if compared with the outcome of the 2019 Lok Sabha election. It had won 18 of the 42 seats and taken a lead on 121 of the 294 Assembly segments by garnering 40.2 per cent vote share. However, in this election, it won 77 seats — 44 seats less than the lead it had taken in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

The people of West Bengal chose to rally behind Mamata Banerjee despite the vigorous canvassing against her by tall BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It seems that the Trinamool Congress was successful in consolidating the Muslim votes and that had a direct impact on the election results. In Kerala, the LDF Government got due recognition from the voters for its efficient management of the State during the severe flood and its proper handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's good for the BJP to be ambitious but the recent Assembly results have shown that over-ambition is counterproductive.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

of one, perhaps two, new icons. Now the State has newly elected MLA and to-be-Chief Minister M K Stalin who is well suited for this new generation and for the DMK. He is 68 years old and has finally reached where he wanted to be for five long decades in the shadow of his father and one of the leading lights of the Dravidian movement, the late Muthuvel Karunanidhi.

However, the AIADMK hasn't done as badly as was expected, especially with the weight of an alliance with the BJP which was more like a liability. Stalin, because of his genealogy, long years in politics and two successive wins, in 2019, when the DMK-led grouping won 38 of the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the State, and now, can stake claim to being the next Dravidian icon.

Anshita Rochwani | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

So far, refrained from ordering a sweeping lockdown. But if the people do not comply with the restrictions, harsher steps might have to be taken.



Punjab Chief Minister
— Amarinder Singh



US Secretary of State
— Antony Blinken

Everybody is building more and more oxygen plants, getting tonnes and tonnes of oxygen cylinders. How are we compensating for all the oxygen that we are forcefully drawing from the environment?



Actor
— Kangaana Ranaut



Rajasthan Royals opener
— Jos Buttler

Nirvachan Sadan is the new crematorium in Delhi. Constitutional bodies (are) burnt here.

TMC leader
— Mahua Moitra

FIRST COLUMN

TIME FOR COURSE CORRECTION



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Economic activities have been hit so hard by the lockdown that traders have cried for deferment of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and other taxes. According to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), the daily loss of business owing to the lockdown in Delhi is likely to be around ₹600 crore while the total loss across the nation could be nearly ₹30,000 crore if full and partial lockdowns, night curfews and other forms of restrictions are taken into account. CAIT's secretary general Praveen Khandelwal says that non-compliance with these tax stipulations will attract huge penalties on traders across the country. There is no policy or revival plan and the economy is shrinking as people's incomes are in a tailspin, markets have sagging demand and activities are at a virtual thaw. A hard lockdown was imposed on March 24, 2020 without giving a simple thought on how 130 crore Indians would survive if their livelihoods were snatched away. It happened and the next three months revealed that the decision to close down all activities, except those centered around COVID-19, had led the country to a devastating path. Lakhs of the 18 crore migrant workers hit the road amid loss of work and dignity. Nearly 13 months down the line, the Government should have come out with a road map till now but, alas the nation became complacent about having conquered COVID-19 only to realise too late that the virus has not gone and has hit us with greater ferocity. Consequently, there has been an exponential surge in infections, a mounting death toll, lack of medical oxygen and medicines.

The State has largely remained a mute spectator compelling the courts to intervene and stop the administration from smothering voices being raised against the Government's monumental failure. Despite its massive failure to deal with the crisis, the Centre has claimed that all arms of the Government are working unitedly and rapidly to deal with the situation. The nation is still expecting some decisive action against the pandemic but with its ailing healthcare system and mounting death toll the situation is becoming grim day by day. Reports from the countryside say that half-baked hospitals are doing more harm and how the bodies are cremated remains a mystery. "The State has failed in its fundamental obligation to protect the basic fundamental right that is the right to life under Article 21", said Delhi High Court on April 30. The Bench, earlier during the same hearing, had noted the "complete failure of the State" when dealing with other pleas.

We have not suddenly plummeted into such a state. It appears that the nation was in euphoria of collecting brownie points and has given up all thoughts about the lives of its own people or the state of its economy. The latest indicators from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) about the banking system do not bring any comfort. The bank losses or Non Performing Assets (NPA) are mounting. In such a scenario, credit squeeze is obvious. The Rupee is plunging and petrol prices are at an artificial high. The time for correction has come. The Government needs to own up to failure on its part to control the pandemic. Further, it must also admit that it failed to provide employment and prevent loss of jobs following the demonetisation exercise and pushed the country into severe social and economic crisis. The Centre must reformulate the plan for resurgence of the country with the help of the Opposition, religious leaders and social groups not merely for Gross Domestic Product figures but for survival of the informal sector and the free flow of cash. It must give up all political ego. Healthcare should now become the bedrock of the nation's resurgence, supported by a prudent economic policy, even if that means forming a national Government.

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Make the COVID jabs free for everyone

There is a dire need to vaccinate at least one billion people within a short time and, given the pitfalls of differentiated pricing, the Centre should opt for inoculating everyone free of cost

Under the 'Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy (LPANCVS)', announced on April 19, which was kicked off from May 1, the Centre has plans to vaccinate all adults above 18 years of age. Before this, the inoculation drive that was launched on January 16, covered healthcare and frontline workers and people above 50 years of age and those with comorbidities. In the second phase of the drive the age limit was brought down to those above 45. Vaccine manufacturers were giving all their supplies to the Government of India (GOI) and charging ₹150 per dose even as the latter was arranging for inoculation of eligible people free at Government vaccination centres (GVCs). However, those opting to get vaccinated at private hospitals needed to pay ₹250 per dose. The GOI incurred a subsidy on vaccination done at GVCs equal to ₹150 per dose, plus the cost of administering it. It was funded from the Union Budget.

Even as the above arrangement involved differential pricing, like free for those who got vaccinated at GVCs and others getting the jab at private hospitals for a price, the proposed system from this month is much more complex. Under it, of its total supply, the vaccine manufacturer would give 50 per cent to the GOI at the rate of ₹150 per dose and make the remaining 50 per cent available to State Governments, private hospitals, industrial establishments at a price to be declared in advance (the price charged for vaccination by private hospitals would be monitored). People can make an "informed" choice at the time of booking an appointment at a private vaccination centre.

The vaccines will not be available for sale at pharmacists or chemist shops in the open market. The present system of private hospitals inoculating those above 45 years for ₹250 per dose will cease to exist as they will no longer be getting any supplies from the GOI quota and will have to procure directly from vaccine manufacturers at the price notified by the latter.

Meanwhile, the manufacturers have announced prices they intend to charge from the State Governments and private hospitals. The Serum Institute of India (SII), the maker of Covishield, will charge ₹300 per dose on supplies to States and ₹600 per dose from private hospitals. Bharat Biotech, the maker of Covaxin, will charge ₹400 per dose from States and ₹1,200 per dose on supplies to private hospitals. Both will continue to supply to the GOI at the rate of ₹150 per dose (this is as per a statement issued by Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare).

Putting all pieces together, there will be a minimum of five prices for the COVID-19 vaccination dose i.e. zero, ₹300, ₹400, ₹600, ₹1,200 (the cost to the recipients will be higher by an amount equal to the "service charge" levied by the State Governments/private hospitals to cover the cost of administering the vaccine) depending on the vaccine type and the channel through which it is done.

Meanwhile, more vaccines like Sputnik V, Nasal Covaxin and so on, are expected to get approval shortly. But those are likely to be priced



THE COST OF PURCHASE I.E. ABOUT ₹40,000 CRORE CAN BE MET FROM THE ALLOCATION OF ₹35,000 CRORE MADE IN THE UNION BUDGET FOR 2021-22 (AN ADDITIONAL ₹5,000 CRORE WOULD BE NEEDED TO MAKE UP FOR THE DEFICIT). AS FOR THE SERVICE CHARGE FOR VACCINATION, THIS COST MAY BE PAID BY THE STATES FROM THEIR BUDGETS

The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.



even higher. The earlier arrangement was far from optimal as it entailed differential treatment of eligible people depending on the place they got the jab. While, those going to GVCs got it free, others opting for private hospitals paid ₹250 per dose. Even as the involvement of private hospitals was justified in view of the need to cover a large number (there are 300 million in the 45 plus group) within a short time frame, putting a price tag to it and that too ₹100 over and above the price they paid to manufacturers militated against this objective. Indeed, this was a potent factor behind dismal results thus far with only about 20 million in a total of 300 million having got both the shots (even as other factors such as the initial vaccine hesitancy among the public at large as also supply constraints were equally responsible).

Under the new regime, even as the facility of getting a jab for ₹250 per dose at private hospitals for persons in the 45 years plus category has been withdrawn, the Central Government wants over 500 million people (50 per cent of about one billion of the adult population i.e. over 18 years whom it expects to get jabs from States and private hospitals' quota) to pay a price high enough to destabilise the budget of even a middle income family.

Consider the following two scenarios: First, let's take the lowest in the price spectrum i.e.

Covishield — supplied for ₹300 per dose to States. Add service charge of ₹200 per dose (67 per cent of the price; this is the mark-up applied to ₹150 per dose being the price billed to private hospitals under the erstwhile dispensation), the recipient will pay ₹500 per dose. For two doses, this comes to ₹1,000. A family of four will have to shell out ₹4,000.

At another extreme, consider Covaxin supplied for ₹1,200 per dose to private hospitals. Plus service charge, the recipient will pay ₹2,000 per dose. For two doses, this will be ₹4,000. In this case, the dent on this family's budget will be ₹16,000.

Given the high prices at State centres and much higher at private hospitals and considering that vaccination from the GOI quota (50 per cent of total supply) is for free, people will tend to gravitate towards the latter. The clamour for getting vaccinated at GVCs will be so pronounced as to cause a complete breakdown of this network. This could be averted if only the State Governments decide to do free inoculation even out of the paid quota; however, this will require them to give heavy subsidy from the State Budget.

Already, some States like Maharashtra, Delhi and so on have announced their intent to give it all free and others are likely to follow suit. If, it has to be free for all involving subsidisation by the Centre or States then why go

through such a cumbersome route?

Considering that the crisis is of an unprecedented magnitude (once in a lifetime) afflicting the entire population, there is a dire need for vaccinating at least one billion within the shortest possible time frame and given the pitfalls of differentiated pricing, the Centre should opt for inoculating everyone free of charge.

Apart from GVCs, all other stakeholders like the State health facilities, private hospitals, industrial establishments and so on should be involved in the vaccination drive. They can pick up their requirements directly from the manufacturers even as the GOI does overall coordination, negotiates a good price and makes payment.

Given the mammoth numbers i.e. two billion doses, a price of ₹200 per dose should be good enough to cover the cost and give good return to the manufacturers (here, it is pertinent to recall a statement by Adar Poonawalla, CEO, SII, "the firm was making a profit even at a price of ₹150 per dose"). The cost of purchase i.e. about ₹40,000 crore can be met from the allocation of ₹35,000 crore made in the Union Budget for 2021-22 (an additional ₹5,000 crore would be needed to make up for the deficit). As for the "service charge" for vaccination, this cost may be paid by the States from their Budgets.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I THINK THAT THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL MADE A HISTORIC MISTAKE BY NOT GIVING THE BJP A CHANCE AND BY RE-ELECTING THIS CORRUPT AND CRUEL LADY. —BJP MP BABUL SUPRIYO



IT IS THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL AND THE VICTORY OF DEMOCRACY. BENGAL HAS SAVED INDIA TODAY. THIS VICTORY HAS SAVED HUMANITY. —WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE



The mysterious end of the quest for knowledge in India

What happened that made the development of science and technology less important after the great burst of scientific creativity in ancient India?

Joseph Needham a brilliant British bio-chemist who had obtained a doctorate from Cambridge University in 1925, visited China several times. In his book 'Science and Civilisation in China' Needham posed the problem, known as "Needham's grand question", in respect of China, but which applies equally to India.

The question is this: Why did China (and India), which were far ahead of Western countries in science and technology at one time, later fell behind, did not have an industrial revolution, became backward and consequently victims of imperialism and colonisation?

There is no doubt that both India and China were at one time far ahead of the Western countries in science and technology. China invented gunpowder, the magnetic compass, paper and printing,



MARKANDEY KATJU

The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.

which, according to Francis Bacon, were the three most important inventions facilitating Europe to pass from the dark Middle Ages to the Modern age. But why did China's progress in science and technology stop thereafter? According to Needham it could have been the Confucian philosophy, which was incompatible with scientific development, which was responsible for this. But is this explanation not superficial?

As for India, it was far ahead of the West in ancient times. Indians invented the decimal system in mathematics, which was one of the revolutionary inventions in history. The numerals in the decimal system were known as Arabic numerals by the Westerners, but the Arabs called them Indian numerals. Were they really Arabic or Indian? To answer this we

may note that the languages Arabic, Persian, and Urdu are written from right to left. But if we ask an Arab, Persian, or Urdu writer, to write any number (say 259 or 1,379) he will write it from left to right. This indicates that these numbers were taken from a language which is written from left to right. And now it is accepted universally that the decimal system and the number zero, was invented in India.

The importance of zero can be understood by considering the following: The ancient Romans built a great civilisation of Caesar and Augustus. But if we were to ask an ancient Roman to write the number one million he would have been stumped. The reason for this is that the ancient Romans wrote their numbers in alphabets, V standing for five, X standing for ten, L for 50, C for 100, D for 500, and



M for 1,000 (or millennium). There was no alphabet expressing a number greater than 1,000. So if an ancient Roman had to write 2,000 he would have to write MM and if he wanted to write one million he had to write M a 1,000 times.

On the other hand, according to the system invented by Indians, to write one million they had only to write one and

then put six zeros after that. The ancient Greeks and Romans just did not have the imagination to conceive of a number called zero. By using zero our ancestors could conceive of astronomically large numbers. Thus, 1,000 had three zeros after one. If we add two more zeros we get one lakh and so on.

Aryabhata, who reputedly lived in the 5th Century AD worked on quadratic equations, the binomial theorem and calculated the value of pi to a fairly accurate degree. He also made significant contributions to astronomy, being perhaps the first person in the world to prove that the Earth rotates on its axis, thus causing day and night.

Brahmagupta and Bhaskar also made great contributions in mathematics and so on. In medical science India was at least 1,000, if not 1,500, years

ahead of any country. Thus, Sushrut, the father of surgery, invented plastic surgery in the 6th century BC while the Britishers discovered it only towards the end of the 18th century AD during the Anglo-Mysore wars, and that too, from a traditional physician who lived near Pune.

The harbour at Lothal in Gujarat, which is regarded as quite modern in its construction, was built around 5,000 years ago, and is regarded as part of the Indus valley civilisation. Why, then, did we fall behind the West? Why did we not have an industrial revolution? Why was our advance in science and technology blocked, while Europe produced Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Descartes, Robert Boyle, Cavendish, Priestly, Lavoisier, Maxwell, Gauss, Max Planck, Rutherford, Heisenberg, Pauli,

Niels Bohr, Einstein, Schrodinger, Chadwick, Madam Curie, Otto Hahn in physics, chemistry and mathematics, William Harvey, Ross, and so on in medicine, Edmond Halley and so on in astronomy, James Hutton in Geology, Linnaeus, Buffon, and Darwin in biology, and so on. No doubt we produced CV Raman, Srinivasa Ramanujan, Chandrashekhhar, S Bose and so on but these are just a handful

What happened that made in the history of India the development of science and technology less important (after the great burst of scientific creativity in ancient India), while in the West it became more important? This mystery is yet to be solved. Were there cultural, economic, or historical factors involved in this deceleration in learning? A lot of scientific investigation is called for.

Ethnic guerrillas in Myanmar say they shot down copter

AP ■ BANGKOK

An ethnic rebel group in northern Myanmar said it shot down a Government military helicopter on Monday during heavy fighting over a strategic position.

The claim by the Kachin Independence Army came as protests against Myanmar's military government continued in Kachin State and elsewhere in the country. It would be the first aircraft shot down during recent hostilities between the government and ethnic guerrilla armies. There was no immediate comment by the government on the incident.

The Kachin are one of several ethnic minorities who have allied themselves with the nationwide protest movement against the military's February ouster of the elected government of Aung San Suu

Kyi, who was arrested and remains in detention. The country's ethnic minorities have been fighting for decades against the central government for greater autonomy.

Government offences are underway against the Kachin and the Karen, another ethnic minority in eastern Myanmar that maintains its own armed force and also has been the target of airstrikes. The fighting in Kachin and Karen states has displaced more than 45,000 villagers.

Col Naw Bu, a spokesman for the Kachin Independence Army, said his group's forces shot down the aircraft after government forces used helicopters and jet fighters in an attack on Momauk township, where the Kachin seized a base at the foot of Alaw Bum mountain from the government on March 25.



Anti-coup protesters burn tires and chant slogans with banner read "The Kamayut strike will be fight for to the end when we get victory" during the demonstration against the military coup in Kamayut township Yangon on Monday

The ruling junta continues to face challenge in the cities and towns of Myanmar, where street protests are still being held more than three months after it seized power

A video on social media said to be of the helicopter shows, at a great distance, an aircraft diving as the sounds of heavy weapons are heard. As the helicopter continues a steep descent, it appears to catch fire and leaves a trail of smoke. The video, and another taken from

a distance showing smoke from what was said to be the crash site, could not be independently verified.

Naw Bu said it was the first aircraft shot down in what has become a fierce battle lasting almost two weeks after the government attacked with heavy artillery and fighter jets.

"Good news! Our prayer has been answered. KIA shot down a terrorist's helicopter," Hkanhpa Sadan, foreign secretary of the guerrilla army's affiliated Kachin National Organisation, said on Twitter. Opponents of the military government routinely refer to its forces as "terrorists".

The ruling junta continues to also face a challenge in the cities and towns of Myanmar, where street protests are still being held more than three months after it seized power. Security forces often use

lethal force to break up the protests. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which tracks deaths and arrests, said at least five civilians were killed Sunday on what protesters declared was Global Myanmar Spring Revolution Day.

The organisation said security forces have now killed 765 protesters and bystanders. The government puts the death toll at about one-third that figure and says its actions are justified to stop what it calls rioting.

The government also has kept up targeted arrests of activists and other people it considers to be behind the resistance movement. The Assistance Association says 3,555 people have been detained since the army's seizure of power. About 40 journalists are among those being held.

Biden recalls raid on bin Laden in Pak in 2011

Vows to prevent another terror attack on America

PTI ■ WASHINGTON



clarity and conviction of President Obama in making the call; the courage and skill of the American team on the ground.

"It had been almost ten years since our nation was attacked on 9/11 and we went to war in Afghanistan, pursuing al Qaeda and its leaders. We followed bin Laden to the gates of hell — and we got him.

"We kept the promise to all those who lost loved ones on 9/11; that we would never forget those we had lost, and that the United States will never waver in our commitment to prevent another attack on our homeland and to keep the American people safe," the president said.

Biden noted that as a result of the efforts taken the US, his administration was bringing to an end the country's longest war and draw down the last of

the American troops from Afghanistan where al Qaeda is now a "greatly degraded" terror group.

The US and NATO formally began withdrawing their last troops from Afghanistan on Saturday, according to White House and military officials. President Biden set May 1, 2021 as the official date on which the remaining troops would begin pulling out, although the military has been flying equipment out of the country in recent weeks, according to US media reports.

There are between 2,500-3,500 US troops and about 7,000 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) soldiers remaining in Afghanistan, the last of whom will leave the war-torn country by the end of September.

Under a deal signed last year between the Taliban militants and the administration of former president Donald Trump, foreign forces were to have left by May 1 while the Taliban held off attacking international troops.

Biden last month pushed back the May 1 pullout, saying some troops would stay on until September 11 this year, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, citing the security situation.

Saudi King names new Economy Minister, eldest son as adviser

AP ■ RIYADH

Saudi Arabia's King Salman appointed a new Economy Minister and named his eldest living son as a special adviser in a series of royal decrees issued early on Monday.

The king named Faisal al-Ibrahim as the minister of economy and planning, a move that promotes him from his post as deputy minister in which he'd served as since early 2018.

Al-Ibrahim has previously held jobs with Aramco and in the country's Council of Economic Affairs and Development, according to Saudi state media reports.

Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan had been serving as the acting minister of economy since last year. In another decree published in state media, King Salman appointed Prince Sultan bin Salman as a special adviser to his father.

The prince had been head of the Saudi Space Authority, leaning on his experience as the first Arab astronaut to go to space in 1985.

The space authority will now be chaired by Abdullah al-Swaha, who is also the minister of communications and information technology.

US officials in West Asia to reassure jittery allies over Iran

AP ■ ABU DHABI

Top Biden administration officials and US senators crisscrossed the Middle East on Monday, seeking to assuage growing unease among Gulf Arab partners over America's re-engagement with Iran and other policy shifts in the region.

The trips come as the U.S. and Iran, through intermediaries in Vienna, discuss a return to Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal with world powers that former President Donald Trump abandoned three years ago.

The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf allies, excluded from Obama-era nuclear negotiations, have repeatedly pressed for a seat at the table, insisting that any return to the accord must address Iran's ballistic missile program and support for regional proxies.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., a key Biden ally dispatched on overseas diplomatic missions, told reporters in the UAE's capital of Abu Dhabi that he hoped to allay the sheikhdom's "understandable and legitimate concerns" about the return to the landmark deal and to create a "broader engagement" with Gulf partners.

Coons said "close consul-

tation" with the UAE about the ongoing talks in Vienna was "important, expected and happening," adding that he hopes the Emiratis "may not just be notified, but actually help."

What that means remains unclear, as Gulf states now watch with resignation as negotiations gain traction in the Austrian capital. When asked to elaborate, Coons balked at the suggestion that the UAE's input had acquired any greater significance in talks with Iran over the last five years.

"I did not in any way mean to suggest that there was some deal in the works where the Emiratis would be securing anything," he said. "Vienna is the place where the United States government, the administration, is negotiating"

Regional tensions are rising. To pressure the Biden administration to lift sanctions and come back into compliance with the deal, Iran has steadily violated the accord's limitations on nuclear enrichment and stockpiles of enriched uranium. The long shadow war between Israel and the Iran has intensified, with suspected Israeli attacks on Iranian ships in volatile Mideast waterways and at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility.

US begins reuniting families separated at Mexico border

San Diego: The Biden administration said on Monday that four families that were separated at the Mexico border during Donald Trump's presidency will be reunited in the United States this week in what Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas calls "just the beginning" of a broader effort.

Two of the four families include mothers who were separated from their children in late 2017, one Honduran and another Mexican. Mayorkas said, declining to detail their identities. He described them as children who were 3 years old at the time and "teenagers who have had to live without their parent during their most formative years."

Parents will return to the United States on humanitarian parole while authorities consider other longer-term forms of legal status, said Michelle Brane, executive director of the administration's Family Reunification Task Force. The children are already in the US exactly how many families will reunite in the United States and in what order is linked to negotiations with the American Civil Liberties Union to settle a federal lawsuit in San Diego, but Mayorkas said there were

more to come.

"We continue to work tirelessly to reunite many more children with their parents in the weeks and months ahead," Mayorkas told reporters ahead of the announcement. "We have a lot of work still to do, but I am proud of the progress we have made and the reunifications that we have helped to achieve this week."

More than 5,000 children were separated from their parents during the Trump administration going back to July 1, 2017, many of them under a "zero-tolerance" policy to criminally prosecute any adult who entered the country illegally, according to court filings. The Biden administration is doing its own count going back to Trump's inauguration in January 2017 and, according to Brane, believes more than 1,000 families remain separated.

While family separation under "zero-tolerance" ended in June 2018 under court order and shortly after Trump reversed course, Biden has repeatedly assailed the practice as an act of cruelty. An executive order on his first day in office pledged to reunite families that were still separated "to the greatest extent possible." **AP**

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - I DELHI, AT THE COURT OF THE BUILDING PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI: 110001
CA. NO. 377/20 DATE: 07.01.2021
ICICI BANK LTD. VERSUS MR. RAJESH KUMAR & ORS.RESPONDENT
DEFENDANT
M/S SHUBH KAMMA BUILDTECH PVT. LTD. 197-B, GURGOAN, MAYAPUR VIHAR PHASE-I, NEW DELHI-110019
ALSO AT: A-80, SECT-2 NOIDA-UP-201301
Whereas the above named applicant(s) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 30,645/- (Rupees Forty Six Lakh Thirty Thousand Six Hundred and Forty Six Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 07.05.2021 At 10.30 A.M.
Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.
By Order of this Tribunal For Registrar DRT-I, DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that one Mr. Vinod Arora is the owner of Apartment No. 1202 on 12th Floor, Building 152.14 So. Mtrs., Building No. III, Pearl Court, Essel Towers, Gurgaon, Haryana, having acquired the same vide Conveyance Deed dated 31/8/05 (Doc. No. 10973). He has lost the original Apartment Buyers Agreement dated 23.04.2005 in respect of the said apartment, a FIR has already been lodged for the same on dated 1/5/2021.
All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.
Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, Mob. 9810063351

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that we, Kuldeep Bishnoi s/o Late KKS Bishnoi and Asha Bishnoi w/o Late KKS Bishnoi have lost the last page (printed both sides) of the original conveyance deed dated 11 June 2015 issued by the Delhi Development Authority in respect of property i.e. Flat No. 841, Second floor, Sector 14, Pocket 2 Dwarka, New Delhi. Any person possessing the above said documents and using them in any manner will do so at his/her own cost and is legally liable. We shall not be responsible for the said document in any manner at any point of time. If found by any person/organization it should be delivered to us to the below mentioned address. If any person/ corporation/firm/company/bank etc. has any claim or right in respect of the above said property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or co-ownership, however, or otherwise is thereby required to intimate in writing to us at the below mentioned address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents. After expiration of the notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and non binding on us. P-1461003, Sakshin Vihar, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi-110010

2 ex-Lankan security officials charged over Easter terror attacks

Colombo: Sri Lanka's Attorney General on Monday slapped 800 charges against two top former security officials for their failure to prevent the deadly 2019 Easter Sunday bomb attacks in which over 270 people, including 11 Indians, were killed.

The charges were unveiled in the Colombo High Court by the country's top law officer Dappula de Livera against former official in the defence ministry Hemasiri Fernando and former chief of police Pujith Jayasundera.

The duo has been accused of neglecting the prior intelligence input on the impending

attacks, thereby failing to prevent the loss of life.

Nine suicide bombers, belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS, carried out coordinating blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels in Sri Lanka on the Easter Sunday in 2019.

A special presidential panel recently recommended that criminal action be taken against both Fernando, Jayasundera and several other senior defense officials, including former president Maithripala Sirisena. **PTI**

EU summons Russia envoy over blacklisting of its officials

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union has summoned Russia's ambassador after Moscow blacklisted eight EU officials in retaliation for the bloc's decision to impose sanctions over the imprisonment of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The Russian list announced Friday includes European Parliament President David Sassoli and Vera Jourova, a vice president of the European Commission whose brief includes rule of law issues and disinformation.

European Commission spokesman Peter Stano said that Ambassador Vladimir Chizhov would meet in Brussels later Monday with

senior EU officials who "will convey to him our strong condemnation and rejection of this decision."

Stano said the Russian-imposed travel bans are "obviously very politically motivated and lack any legal justification. They are groundless." He said that "this all shows that Russia is determined to continue the hostile track of confrontation."

Russia's foreign ministry has accused the EU of wanting to punish Moscow for its "independent foreign and domestic policies" and of trying to limit its development with "unlawful restrictions."

EU foreign ministers will discuss tensions with Russia when they meet on May 10.

16 Niger soldiers killed in attack near the border with Mali

Niamey (Niger): An ambush on a military patrol near Niger's border with Mali killed 16 Niger soldiers and left one missing, the government said.

The patrol was returning from a security mission near the border with Mali in Tillia in the northern part of Niger's Tahoua region when it was attacked by a band of men riding motorcycles on Saturday evening, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement late Sunday. Six other soldiers were wounded in the ambush.

Niger's military also intercepted a group of suspected extremists Friday night, killing at least 24 who were preparing to attack Baibangou, a village about 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of the capital, Niamey,

according to a statement from the ministry of defense.

"While in police custody, before being transported to Niamey, the suspected terrorists tried to escape around 4 a.m. And 24 of them were shot dead by the army," the defense ministry said.

Both incidents are being officially investigated.

Niger and neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali are battling the spread of deadly extremist violence from groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

The increasing violence has killed thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands despite the presence of regional and international troops. **AP**

Israeli settlers attack Palestinian village after shooting

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank overnight, setting brush fires and hurling stones, Palestinian officials and an Israeli rights group said Monday.

It appeared to be a revenge attack after three Israelis were wounded in a drive-by shooting at a nearby traffic junction on Sunday.

The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said dozens of settlers attacked the village of Jaloud. It circulated videos showing the fires, with people shouting in the background. Israeli security forces arrested 11 Palestinians and four people were wounded by rubber bullets, B'Tselem said.

Ghassan Daghlas, a Palestinian Authority official who monitors settlement activity in the northern West Bank, provided a similar account, saying the villagers had come out to defend the village after the settlers attacked.

The Israeli military said Israeli civilians and Palestinians hurled rocks at each other outside the village and that "a number of locations were ignited." It did not provide details on what triggered the violence. It said around 10 people were detained, but did not identify them.

Radical Israeli settlers have been known to carry out so-called "price tag" attacks on Palestinian communities in response to violence or perceived Israeli plans to restrict settlement activity.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 war, and the Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state. Nearly 5,000,000 Israeli settlers live in more than 100 settlements scattered across the West Bank, which is home to some 2.5 million Palestinians. **PTI**

EXTENSION OF CANCELLATION OF UNRESERVED MAIL/EXPRESS EMU SPECIAL TRAINS
It is notified for the information of passengers that the cancellation period of following earlier announced cancelled trains has been extended as per the details given below:-

Train No. & Name	Extended Up to
04184/04183 Delhi Jn. - Tundla Jn. - Delhi Jn. Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021
04418/04417 Delhi Jn. - Hathras Killah - Delhi Jn. Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021
04414/04415 New Delhi - Aligarh Jn. - New Delhi Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021
04420/04419 Ghaziabad - Mathura Jn. - Ghaziabad Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

960/21

RailMadad Helpline No. 139

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Attention travelers! EU proposes reopening external borders

Brussels: In an announcement sure to be welcomed by travelers worldwide, EU officials on Monday proposed easing restrictions on visiting the 27-nation bloc as vaccination campaigns across the continent gather speed. Travel to the European Union is currently extremely limited except for a handful of countries with low infection rates.

But with the summer tourist season looming, the bloc's European Commission hopes the new recommendations will dramatically expand that list. The Commission hopes the move will soon allow travelers reunite with their friends and relatives living in Europe and support the bloc's economy this summer.

"Time to revive EU tourism industry and for cross-border friendships to rekindle — safely," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. **AP**

Oz PM defends ban on citizens returning from India; says it's in 'best interests'

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Monday defended his government's decision to ban and impose a jail term and a penalty for Australians trying to return from India, saying it is in the country's "best interests" and to prevent a third wave of infections.

The Australian government, for the first time in history, recently imposed a ban on its citizens from returning home, if they have spent time in India up to 14 days before flying back.

The government threatened to prosecute them with a possibility of five years of jail term or a penalty of 66,000 Australian dollars (USD 50,899). **AP**

26 die as speed boat overturns in B'desh river

Dhaka: An overcrowded speedboat ferrying over 30 passengers and defying the Covid-19 restrictions capsized after hitting a stationary sand-laden cargo vessel in the Padma River on Monday, leaving at least 26 people dead, a senior Bangladesh police officer said.

The accident occurred at the old Kanthalbari ferry terminal in Shibchar upazila of Madaripur at around 8 am. The boat, driven by an inexperienced driver, overturned in the Padma River in central Bangladesh while heading for Madaripur district from Munshiganj district. Rescuers have retrieved at least 26 bodies, police said.

"We have retrieved 26 bodies, rescued alive five others ... But searches are underway for more as several speedboat passengers are feared missing," said Ashique Rahman, the police inspector of a nearby ferry terminal. **PTI**

Govt waives IGST on import of Covid-relief material

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday waived Integrated GST (IGST) till June 30 on the import of Covid-related relief material donated or received free of cost from outside India for free distribution.

The Finance Ministry in a statement said the government had received a number of representations from charitable organisations, corporate entities, and other Associations/entities outside India seeking exemption from IGST on the import of Covid-19 relief material, donated/received free of cost from outside India for free distribution.

“Accordingly, the Central Government has ... Granted exemption from IGST on import of such goods received free of cost for free distribution for covid relief,” it said, adding the exemption would be applic-

able till June 30.

This exemption would also cover goods already imported but lying uncleared at the Customs ports.

The Government has already exempted from customs duty import of a host of COVID-related relief materials, including Remdesivir injection and its APIs, Inflammatory diagnostic (markers) kits, medical grade oxygen, oxygen therapy related equipment such as oxygen concentrators, cryogenic transport tanks, etc, and Covid vaccines.

The IGST exemption given on Monday would be subject to nodal authorities, appointed by the state governments, authorising any entity, relief agency or statutory body, for free distribution of such relief material.

The said goods can be imported free of cost by a state government or, any entity/

relief agency/ statutory body, authorized in this regard for free distribution anywhere in India.

The importer shall before clearance of goods from Customs produce a certificate from the said nodal authorities that goods are meant for free distribution for Covid relief.

After imports, the importer shall produce, to the Deputy or Assistant Commissioner of Customs at the port within a period of six months from the date of importation or within such extended

period not exceeding nine months, a statement containing details of goods imported and distributed free of cost.

This statement shall be certified by the said nodal authority of the state government.

“This exemption shall thus enable import of the Covid

relief supply imported free of cost for free distribution without payment of IGST (up to the 30th June, 2021). As customs duty is already exempt , these imports will not attract any customs duty or IGST,” the ministry added.

India’s single day COVID infections had crossed a record 4 lakh mark last week. On Monday, 3.68 lakh new infections and 3,417 deaths were reported.

Last week, the government slashed IGST rate on import of oxygen concentrators for personal use to 12 per cent, from 28 per cent, for two months till June 30.

Under Goods and Services Tax (GST), the tax levied on consumption of goods or rendering of service is split 50:50 between the Centre and the state. Such tax is known as Central-GST or CGST and State-GST or SGST.

Covid crisis, rollback of stamp duty cut impact Mumbai home sales

IANs ■ MUMBAI

The second wave of Covid-19 and the rollback of the stamp duty cut in Maharashtra impacted the housing sales in April, showed a report by Knight Frank India.

The report noted that Mumbai recorded upwards of 10,000 residential property registrations in April 2021.

However, upon delving deeper into the property registrations data, it was found that, only 7 per cent of these registrations were from new

residential sales concluded in the same month, while 93 per cent of the registrations were from properties transacted between December 2020 to March 2021 for which applicable stamp duties were paid during the lower rate window, it said.

The Maharashtra state government in December 2020 had given a leeway of four months to homebuyers to register a property after the payment of stamp duty in order to prevent crowding of registration offices.

Corporate revenue seen growing 6% in FY22 as second wave takes a toll: Ind-Ra

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With the second wave of the pandemic disrupting supply chains for most industries, India Ratings has projected an overall 6 per cent median revenue growth for corporates this fiscal over FY20.

However, this will be a high 21.2 per cent over FY21, the year of the pandemic when half of the year was almost lost in lockdowns; and the forecast is more than its own earlier assumption of 4.4 per cent, though.

The service-oriented sector is the worst hit so far when it comes to supply-side disruption from the second wave of the pandemic, the report said on Monday, adding this has pushed back their recovery beyond the current fiscal.

While FY22 is likely to be better than FY20 for most of the sectors due to an improvement in revenue benefitting largely from elevated prices and pent-up demand resulting in higher volume growth, volatile commodity prices along with interest rates reversal and the rupee fall are likely

ly to cap profitability, the report added.

“Given these, we expect an overall median revenue growth of 6 per cent for corporates in FY22 over FY20 and 21.2% over FY21,” India Ratings said, and pointed out this is an increase from its earlier estimate of a median growth of 4.4 %.

The gains in FY22 is primarily a result of some level of consolidation resulting in bipolarisation, meaning larger companies growing faster than smaller ones, it said. Moreover, excess cash used for deleveraging across sectors will result in higher operating leverage supporting the overall credit profile of corporates, the agency noted.

But sectors like pharma, chemicals, cement and steel may witness some capex on account of higher liquidity cushion with them, it added.

Lower revenue growth is likely to test the credit profile in FY23 due to the moderation in consumption and investment demand outlook and smoothening out of supply chain issues, and the consequent possible moderation in prices, the rating agency said.

High frequency indicators show economic activity ‘softening’: Crisil Research

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

India’s high frequency indicators have started to show a softening trend in economic activity, Crisil Research said on Monday.

“In India, the impact of state-announced restrictions are more clearly showing up across high frequency indicators - they all trended down for the second consecutive week,” it said. Retail mobility fell 8.2 percentage points (pp) on average in the week ending May 2, while workplace mobility slowed 7.1 pp.

Besides, toll collection through electronic mode declined 2 per cent on-week.

Similarly, Goods and Services Tax e-way bill collection (volume) declined 6.9 per cent on-week for week ending April 25.

Lately, India’s crushing second Covid-19 wave has been making new peaks with every passing day, as daily cases near the 4 lakh plus level.

“If it was any consolation amid the steep rise in daily cases and deaths, growth in

recoveries, which lagged cases till last week, grew faster by 57 per cent in the week April 26-May 2. That compared with 16 per cent growth in cases.”

“Growth in daily cases in major affected states, such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh too slowed down, compared with the week ending April 25. But recovery rate has declined to 82 per cent as of May 2, due to the high base of confirmed cases,” Crisil said.

Furthermore, it said that Covid-19’s second wave is closing in on rural India.

“The share of predominantly rural districts in new cases in April was 30 per cent up from 21 per cent in March. This is still lower than the peak reached in the first wave (at 40 per cent in August 2020).”

“Further, daily vaccinations are slowing as vaccine supplies are choked. They dropped from 1,992 per million in the week prior to 1,585 per million on average, in the week ending May 02. This is the third straight week that daily vaccinations have declined.”

India’s manufacturing output inches up as demand rises: PMI

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Demand growth pushed India’s manufacturing sector output higher in April, showed IHS Markit India Manufacturing PMI report on Monday.

Accordingly, the report said economic conditions in India’s manufacturing sector remained favourable in April, as companies scaled up production in line with a further improvement in demand.

Consequently, the headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) inched up from 55.4 (index reading) in March to 55.5 in April.

The PMI ranges between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month.

Besides, the report said consumer goods sector was the strongest-performing category, followed by capital goods and then intermediate goods. “While output and sales

THE PMI RANGES BETWEEN 0 AND 100, WITH A READING ABOVE 50 INDICATING AN OVERALL INCREASE COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS MONTH

increased at the slowest rates since last August due to an intensification of the Covid-19 crisis, there was a faster upturn in international orders,” the report said.

“Moreover, quantities of purchases expanded at one of the strongest rates seen for over nine years as firms sought to boost their inventories.”

Furthermore, survey participants signalled a steep increase in input costs, the quickest since July 2014, and upward revisions to selling prices.

“The rate of charge inflation climbed to the highest in seven-and-a-half years.”

PIL seeks removal of hoardings promoting beer: HC seeks Delhi Govt, NDMC stand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A PIL in the Delhi High Court on Monday sought direction to the Delhi government and the NDMC to remove the hoardings put up by a Bengaluru-based beer manufacturer advertising its product.


A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh issued notice to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the beer manufacturer - Pegasi Spirits - seeking their stand on the plea by

Advocate Dhruv Chawla, in his plea, has said that the

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) in September last year put out an advisory for private satellite TV channels to ensure that liquor, tobacco and other intoxicants are not advertised directly or indirectly on their channels in violation of existing law.

In March this year he came across several hoardings across Delhi advertising the alcoholic beverage of Pegasi and filed a complaint with the Advertising Standard Council of India (ASCI) regarding the same.

He also filed an application under the Right to Information Act seeking details with regard to any sanction or permission given by NDMC to put up the hoardings.

**KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD**
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OPEN E-TENDER (SINGLE PACKET SYSTEM) INVITATION NOTICE.
Name of Work: Modification / Crossing up to 33KV Overhead lines (infringing the ongoing Railway Electrification project between Ratnagiri to Verna on Konkan Railway route in the State of Maharashtra and GOA) complete into under ground cable. **Tender Notice No:** KR/CO/EL/RN-Verna/xing/T/4/2021, **Date:** 04/05/2021. **Completion Period :** Three Months. **Estimated Cost:** Rs.5,56,10,922/-, Excluding GST. **Last Date & Time for Online Submission of Tender :** 25/05/2021 up to 15.00 Hrs. **Opening of Tender :** On 25/05/2021 at 15.30 Hrs. Amendments/ Corrigendum if any, would be uploaded on IREPS website only. **Submission of Tender Documents :** Through IREPS. Manual Tender Documents shall not be accepted.

SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl, (depicted in the photo), **Namely:** Ritu, **D/o:** Sh. Surender Rai, **R/o:** H.No. 18-B, Gali No. 6, Salapur Khera, Bijwasan, New Delhi, **Aged:** 15 years 9 months, has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of PS Kapashera, New Delhi since 17.03.2021 at 06.15AM. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 098/21 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 17.03.2021, has been registered at P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi.** Her physical description is as under:
Height: 5' Feet, **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Medium, **Clothing:** Sky Blue Colour Top and Jeans and Slippers in her feet.
Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/ kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Kapashera, New Delhi at **E-mail: ciccbi@cbi.nic.in or website: http://cbi.nic.in Fax: 011-230111334, Tele No. : 011-23014046 (Direct), 011-23015229, 23015218 extn. 210**

**Ritu**

S.H.O
P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi
Ph. 011-25063758, 25066105
DP/608/SW/2021.

Sugar production reaches 29.91 mn tonnes in Oct-Apr of 2020-21: ISMA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country’s sugar production has reached 29.91 million tonne till April of the ongoing 2020-21 marketing season, industry body ISMA said on Monday.

With regard to sugar exports, mills have contracted for shipments of 5.4 to 5.5 million tonne so far. Out of which, 3.5 million tonne has been exported, while another 1 million tonne is expected to be done by April, it said. On ethanol, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said mills have supplied 117.72 crore litres of ethanol to oil marketing companies till April 19 of this year against the total contracted quantity of 302.53 crore litres, it added. Releasing updated production figures, ISMA said mills across the country have produced 29.91 million tonne of sugar during the Oct-April period of the 2020-21 marketing season (Oct-Sept).

ISMA has estimated sugar production to be 30.2 million tonne in the 2020-21 marketing season, higher than 27.42 million tonne achieved in the previous season. As per the ISMA data, Sugar production in Uttar Pradesh, the country’s largest sugar-producing state, remained slightly lower at 10.56 million tonne till April of this year, as against 11.65 million tonne in the year-ago period.

Whereas the output in Maharashtra, the country’s second-largest sugar producer, rose substantially to 10.56 million tonne from 6.09 million tonne in the said period. Similarly, output in Karnataka, the country’s third-largest sugar-producing state, rose to 4.16 million tonne till April of this year as against 3.38 million tonne in the year-ago period. Most mills in these key producing states are expected to close their operations in the next fortnight or so.

75 lakh people lose jobs in April as lockdowns sprout; unemployment at 4-month high, says CMIE

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The second wave of Covid-19 and the resultant localised lockdowns have impacted over 75 lakh jobs, taking the unemployment rate to a four-month high of 8 per cent, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said on Monday.

The situation on the employment front is expected to continue to remain challenging going forward as well, CMIE’s managing director and chief executive Mahesh Vyas said.

“In the month of April, compared to March, we have lost 75 lakh jobs. That is what has caused the jump in the unemployment rate,” he told PTI.

The national unemployment rate touched 7.97 per cent as per the centre’s proprietary data, with urban areas witnessing higher stress at 9.78 per cent and rural joblessness at 7.13 per cent.

The national unemployment rate had stood at 6.50 per cent in March, and the number on both rural and urban front was lower.

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a slew of pockets going

Public Notice

I Kamlesh Kumari Bagai W/o Late Ramesh Chander Bagai, identified by Aadhar no. 711905158139 do affirm and declare that I had given a public notice in The Pioneer News Paper published on 24th April 2021, affirming that my medical records confirm that I do not need any psychological treatment and anyone claiming to have any such record may share the same with me. I affirm that this public notice was given on my own free will and I am firm on the same. I do not take responsibility of any contradictory digital communication, affidavit or document created in my name to contradict the public notice published on 24th April 2021. Kamlesh Kumari Bagai.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that a person (depicted in the photo), **Namely :** Unknown **S/o** Unknown **R/o** Unknown **Age :** about 65 years, **Height :** 5'5", **Complexion :** Wheatish, **Face :** Oval, **Built :** Thin, **Wearing :** Red colour T-shirt & Khakhi half pant was found in unconscious condition at Gate No. 6, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. He was admitted to Lady Harding Medical College Hospital, Delhi, where doctor declared him brought dead on 27.04.2021. In this regard a case vide DD No : 56A, dated 27.04.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Tilak Marg, New Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for 72 hrs in Lady Harding Hospital Mortuary, Delhi.
Any person having any information or clue about this dead person may kindly inform to the following:-
SHO
P.S. Tilak Marg, New Delhi,
New Delhi Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-23364100, 8750870526

DP/266/ND/2021

Markets recoup initial losses to end flat; RIL, banks weigh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex staged a smart recovery from the day’s low to end with marginal losses on Monday, propped up by robust buying in FMCG and telecom counters.

Reliance Industries and banking stocks accounted for most of the losses, while a rebounding rupee also provided support, traders said.

After plunging over 750 points in early trade, the 30-share BSE index made a U-turn to finish 63.84 points or 0.13 per cent lower at 48,718.52.

In similar movement, the broader NSE Nifty closed 3.05 points or 0.02 per cent higher at 14,634.15.

Titan was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 4.58 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, Kotak Bank, ITC, SBI, ONGC and ICICI Bank.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, HUL, Maruti, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, NTPC

and Nestle India were among the gainers, climbing up to 3.98 per cent.

“Domestic equities recovered sharply from day’s low despite weak global cues. While growing uncertainties about collection efficiency and asset quality of banks/NBFCs dragged heavy weight financials, strong buying in FMCG and Metals supported recovery in markets,” said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

While persistent rise in second wave of COVID-19 cases has weighed on investors’ sentiments, steady corporate earnings with positive managements’ commentaries offered support to markets, he noted.

On the macroeconomic front, India’s manufacturing sector activity was largely flat in April, as rates of growth for new orders and output eased to eight-month lows amid the intensification of the COVID-19 crisis, a monthly survey showed on Monday.

World shares mixed after retreat on Wall Street

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Shares were higher in Europe on Monday after a retreat in Asia, where some markets including those in Tokyo and Shanghai were closed for holidays. London was also closed for the May Day holiday.

Hong Kong and Seoul declined while Paris and Frankfurt advanced. US futures were higher.

Oil prices were mixed and the yield on the 10-year Treasury note was steady at 1.62 per cent.

Markets have mostly climbed in recent weeks as investors remain optimistic that the pandemic is slowly and steadily coming to a close, at least in the United States.

Rupee rises by 14 paise to close at nearly 1 month high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee rose by 14 paise to close nearly one-month high of 73.95 against the US dollar on Monday following losses in the American currency in the global markets.

A fall in crude oil prices and positive economic data helped the local unit pare early losses.

The rupee had opened lower at 74.25 and hit the day’s low of 74.33 later in line with early losses in the domestic equities.

The local unit, however, pared its losses in afternoon trade on the back of dollar sale by exporters, positive manufacturing data and a recovery in stock indices.

T Rabi Sankar takes over as new RBI Deputy Guv

PTI ■ MUMBAI

T Rabi Sankar on Monday took over as the new Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India for a period of three years, the central bank said in a statement.

Sankar has filled the vacancy created after the retirement of B P Kanungo on April 2.

The other three deputy governors are Michael D Patra, who heads the all-important monetary policy department; Mukesh Kumar Jain, the commercial banker-turned-central banker; and Rajeshwar Rao.

Sankar was Executive Director of the Reserve Bank before being elevated to the post of deputy governor.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared Sankar’s appointment as the new RBI deputy governor on Saturday.

“In pursuance with the Government of India notification dated May 3, 2021, T Rabi Sankar took over as the Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India today for a period of three years or until further orders, whichever is earlier,” the RBI said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice (Through e-tendering)

Name of work with Its location	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract for TPWS equipment both On board and Trackside equipment for section NDLS-PWL for three years.
Approx. cost of the work (₹)	₹28,59,616/- only
Address of the Office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055
Date & Time for upload the tender/Closing of tender	Tender uploading/closing date & time 02.08.2021 up to 15.00 hrs
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055
Tender No. 558-Sig-16-M-Tender-AMC-048-2021-22 Dated : 03.05.2021 959/2021	
Serving Customers With A Smile	

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of female **Age:** Approx 60 years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 155 Cms., **Built:** Thin, **Face:** Round, was wearing Black colour Salwar & Suit, was admitted in Safdarjung Hospital vide MLC No. 131860/21 on dated 28.04.2021.
She was declared brought dead by doctor. In this regard a **DD No. 40A, dated 28.04.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi.**
Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi
Ph.: 011-24106346, 24106345
DP/649/SW/2021

DOCYARD

DR HP BHARATHI

Deputy Chief Medical Officer

JINDAL NATURECURE INSTITUTE




Time to heal naturally



One of the most common chronic diseases of the respiratory system, asthma affects more than 300 million people across the world with around one-tenth of them in India. While the prevalence of asthma is higher in developed countries, the burden of asthma-related deaths is much higher in developing countries like India. In fact, according to a report published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), over 80 per cent of asthma deaths take place in developing countries.

While environmental allergens like dust, pollen, insects and domesticated animals are the leading triggers of asthma, outdoor air pollution has also emerged as a problematic trigger. Researchers from the French Institute of Health and Medical Research found that high traffic intensity and ozone exposure has increased the risk factors in individuals living with asthma. With rising environmental pollution, the incidence of respiratory disease is increasing in India, particularly among children. It is important therefore to introduce a holistic approach towards the management of this condition through the use of naturopathy and yoga. Evidence suggests that a naturopathic approach can offer long-term health benefits to people with asthma by reducing the intensity of the disease, improving symptoms and lung function while significantly reducing drug requirement.

While modern medicine works in a reactive approach to manage symptoms when they arise, naturopathy works to eliminate the cause and reduce the severity of the disease



Modern medicine relies heavily on the use of steroid inhalation and anti-inflammatory drugs to manage the condition. These drugs work by reducing inflammation and mucus production in the airways, thereby improving symptoms and controlling the condition. However, the high cost of drugs and their potential side effects remain a cause of concern. A naturopathy based treatment, on the other hand, uses a drugless approach which is much safer and sustainable.

Naturopathy is holistic rather than a compartmental way of treating and managing a condition. While modern medicine works in a reactive approach to manage symptoms when they arise, naturopathy works to eliminate the cause and reduce the severity of the disease. The Alternative system of medicine believes that all diseases are caused due to an accumulation of toxins or morbid matter in the body and negative vibrations in the mind. The therapeutic plan in naturopathy is executed in three phases — the elimination phase, which focuses on cleansing the body of accumulated toxins, the soothing phase, which focuses on rejuvenating the body and supplying the necessary nourishment, and the constructive phase, in which the body's metabolic activity is regulated.

The treatment is divided into three therapy sections — Nature cure therapy, Diet therapy and Yoga therapy. Nature Cure therapy consisted of chest pack applied from 30 minutes to an hour once or twice a day depending upon the clinical condition of the patient. This was accompanied by a combination of hot foot and arm bath, partial massage therapy to upper back and chest, fomentation, Asthma Bath, Oxygen Bath, Steam and Sauna Bath, Enema, Steam Inhalation and Drainage therapy. Under the diet therapy, patients were prescribed nutritionally calcium-rich, non-mucus and non-acid generating food-items along with herbs and lots of water. Yogic kriya, Yogasana, Pranayama and Yoganidra spanning into a three-week programme with a gradual gradation in the severity of the practices was the third pillar of the treatment approach.

The study combined with a year follow up of patients had shown highly promising results. The naturopathy approach helped these patients to improve their lung function and symptoms while reducing the requirement of drugs in most patients.

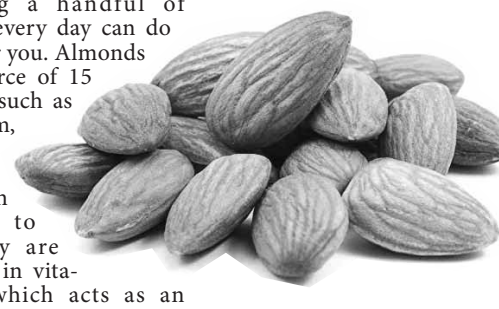
COVIDCARE

ALMONDS: Immunity has taken centrestage during the pandemic. So much so, that anything and everything that has immunity booster written on it is running off the shelves real quick. However, heightened immunity can be achieved at home without too much efforts.

Eating a handful of almonds every day can do the job for you. Almonds are a source of 15 nutrients such as magnesium, protein, riboflavin, zinc, etc. In addition to this, they are also high in vitamin E, which acts as an

antioxidant to support pulmonary immune function. Vitamin E is also known to offer protection against infections caused by viruses and bacteria. It also helps prevent cold.

Alternatively, you can soak five-six almonds overnight and have them as the first thing in morning.





DEALING WITH DOUBLE TROUBLE

On the occasion of World Asthma Day, MUSBA HASHMI speaks with doctors to tell you how one can manage the disease during Corona and what to do if one is unsure whether he is experiencing an asthma attack or COVID symptoms

Breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing, does these sound like COVID symptoms to you? Most probably, yes. However, the fact of the matter is that all these symptoms echo with asthma too.

While it is hard to identify whether a person is having an asthma attack or COVID because the patients are now presenting with newer symptoms, experts say that asthma patients should continue with their medications.

“People feeling breathless may sometimes confuse between Covid symptoms and an asthma attack. The major symptoms seen nowadays in Covid positive patients are breathlessness instead of fever or any other common Covid symptoms such as sore throat, headache, cough etc. In such a situation it is best to use the inhaler so the asthma attack can be managed. In case of asthma patients having contracted Covid, inhalers and bronchodilators as well as other medications should be continued as per schedule. Nebulisers are again very useful in handling Covid induced bronchospasms. Asthma patients can easily use nebulization, with or without steroids, to help alleviate chest congestions and pressure,” Dr Sandeep Nayar, Senior Director & HOD, Chest & Respiratory Diseases, BLK-MAX

Things to keep in mind

■ If you've recently recovered from an acute Covid infection, delay getting the vaccine until you're fully recovered and done with self-isolation and quarantine measures

■ Also, if you had the infection after receiving the first dose of vaccine, then wait at least 1month after recovery before getting the other dose

■ If, along with asthma, you also have other conditions causing immune deficiency like HIV or cancers, consult your doctor before getting the vaccine

■ Do not step out of home. If unavoidable, wear a double

mask while going out

■ Quit smoking as it can be very dangerous for patients with asthma or other respiratory illnesses

■ Avoid outdoor exercises, focus on breathing exercises, and doing yoga indoors

■ Take prescribed medicines and inhalers. Keep necessary medicines stocked up

■ Eat a healthy diet rich in nutrients and proteins. Avoid eating out and foods rich in oil

■ Take steam twice daily to avoid chest congestion

■ Keep anxiety and stress levels as low as possible

Super Speciality Hospital, tells you. Respiratory viruses can trigger and worsen asthma symptoms and if a person has uncontrolled asthma, they may develop or face severe Covid symptoms. Uncontrolled asthma can mean that there will already be inflammation in the lungs and airways will be compromised so in many cases Covid may even lead to pneumonia, fibrosis (thick and stiff lung walls) or other intense respiratory diseases.

“All asthmatics need to be compliant with their regular medications. Covid virus can also cause flare up of asthma in addition to

In case of asthma patients having contracted Covid, inhalers and bronchodilators as well as other medications should be continued as per schedule — Dr Sandeep Nayar

causing pneumonia. Hence, early medical advice should be sought in case of symptomatic deterioration,” Dr Arunesh Kumar, Senior Consultant & Head Respiratory Medicine/Pulmonology, Paras Hospital, says.

Nayar adds that all asthma patients above 18 years of age must get vaccinated to prevent the deadly implications of the virus even if they get infected.

“Vaccination will not just help in protecting from the virus but will also help reduce the severity of the symptoms. However, those having had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to the vaccine or any of its ingredients, must consult their physician,” Nayar says.

Many people don't consider asthma as a serious condition, however, asthma compounded by other infections can increase the risk. An important aspect for all patients is to know the triggers so one can keep away from them and be protected from another attack.

“Identify your triggers. If dust causes problem, try and keep your surroundings dust free. Maintain proper cleanliness at all times. At such a time, when differentiating between COVID and asthma attack has become a task, it is advisable that you are on optimum guard and eliminate anything and everything that can aggravate asthma,” Dr. Deepak Verma, Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital, Ghaziabad, explains.

TRACK THE PROGRESSION

The second wave of COVID-19 has reported a surge in moderate to severe cases.



DR ISRARUL HAQUE tells you how one can monitor the progression of the disease

The second wave of COVID-19 has been characterised by a sharp spike in cases that has overwhelmed the healthcare system in India. Scenes depicting patient and attendants waiting for tests, oxygen and medicines have become common these days. The only solution is to fight back.

The first important observation during this time is that vaccinated people seem to be protected against severe form of the disease. Except a few rare cases, the vaccinated people have mostly recovered well. In addition to this, the infection rate among vaccinated people does not appear to be significantly lower than unvaccinated people. Third, vaccination doesn't provide absolute protection against infection or reinfection. This makes it clear that all citizens need to follow guidelines like wearing of masks, regular hand washing/use of sanitisers and social distancing norms. Fourth, the proportion of people with moderate or severe disease appears to be higher as compared to previous years pandemic. This too has overburdened the healthcare system. Fifth deterioration of patients in second week (from symptom onset) has been reported frequently. The most frequent deterioration has been reported from day seven to day 12 of symptom onset. Deterioration includes rapid decline in oxygen saturation level, markedly increased breathlessness overnight, chest pain, appearance of high grade fever after few days of being afebrile etc. Sixth, though elderly people and people with comorbidities appear to be at higher risk of adverse outcomes but severe disease isn't infrequent among healthy unvaccinated adults.

The picture appears to be gloomy. What can be done at this stage to minimise the loss of lives? Here are a few basic facts that are essential to manage the ongoing pandemic. The first part focuses on what can be done at home. The first step involves classification of disease severity at home. First, anybody testing positive for Covid-19 by rapid antigen kit or RT-PCR needs to isolate himself and monitor his oxygen saturation. Person with oxygen saturation of 94 per cent, 90 to 94 per cent and less than 90 per cent at room air are considered to have mild, moderate and severe disease respectively. These needs to be monitored at least four times a day till two weeks are completed or the person is completely symptom free. Second, we need to identify factors which predict the progression to moderate and severe disease. One important test which can be done at home itself is measuring pulse rate regularly along with oxygen saturation. If the pulse rate is persistently more than 100 on repeated measurement and oxygen saturation drops by more than five per cent on walking for six minutes then there are higher chances of progressing to moderate and severe disease. High Resolution Computed Tomography scoring is informative of disease severity too if it is done on day six of symptom onset.

By following the basic precautions and getting vaccinated will help us beat the virus. The writer is Consultant Physician, Department of Medicine, Patna Medical College, Patna and is also functioning as Nodal Officer of COVID-19 Ward PMCH, Patna

DadiKaKehna

Pearly white teeth and picture perfect smile is on everyone's bucket list. ROSHANI DEVI shares simple and easy to follow home remedies that can help



Dazzling white teeth is a dream of many. Everyone wants to get rid of yellow teeth for that perfect smile. Of course, one can visit a dentist but that will fall heavily on your pocket. Here are home remedies for the same.

Most homes have baking soda and yes, it can be used for almost anything — from cleaning toilets to getting rid of that stain in your favourite dress or shirt to even whitening the teeth.

Take two-four teaspoons of baking soda and add lemon juice to make a paste. Depending on the amount of baking soda, the added liquid will differ.

Apply a liberal amount onto the toothbrush and brush teeth for two minutes. Repeat the process a few times a week or until the desired results are achieved.

Believe it or not rinsing the mouth with coconut oil for whitening is age-old. Prior to brushing your teeth, use a spoon to scoop an appropriate amount of coconut oil up. Take one-and-a-half tablespoon of coconut oil and put it into your mouth. Like the mouthwash, swish the liquid around for 10-15 minutes. Spit out the oil and then brush teeth. Repeat as necessary.

TB care is need of the hour

India accounts for over 27 per cent of the world's 10.8 million TB cases. Experts throw light on the ailment and talk about the role of community and survivors

TB has killed more people in history than any other infectious disease. Mycobacterium Tuberculosis continues to ravage communities and societies across the globe since its emergence 9000 years ago. India bears disproportionately large burden of the global TB incidence, accounting for over 27 per cent of the world's 10.8 million TB cases. This burden is further exacerbated as India also is a leading country for people with multiple drug-resistant forms (MDR-TB) that do not respond to commonly used medicines and aggravate mortality.

Multiple factors contribute to the growing rates of TB: Tuberculosis is a social disease. The under-privileged are disproportionately affected due to poor living conditions, malnutrition and access to healthcare. Stigma leads to underreporting and ostracization within the

community and the workplaces. The long treatment period leads to poor compliance, and the chronic nature of the disease leads to rising mortality.

“The severity of the epidemic has led to a host of TB control initiatives in the country with the Government committed to eradicating TB by 2025. We have made great strides in TB care. The scaling-up of diagnosis and treatment and an efficient system has saved millions of lives. However, while these successes are commendable, there remain gaps, such as the medicalised perception of TB, that need to be addressed. For too long, the focus has been on diagnosis and treatment of disease, with minimal attention to supportive services, making TB redressal a challenge,” Dr Dalbir Singh, President, Global Coalition for TB, says.

TB is a multifaceted issue involving society, gender, and

inequalities. Viewing it through a solely medical lens hinders our opportunities for patient care. A TB patient's first interface with a medical service is often an unfamiliar hospital environment, where a heavy emphasis on technical knowledge and treatment procedures reinforces the patient's growing anxieties. A large part of making TB services accessible involves demystifying the disease. While counselling services ensure that patients are adequately sensitised regarding their illness, these are still centralised facilities that are inaccessible for many. We need to move towards decentralised patient-centric approaches that serve to reduce the burden on marginalised communities.

“While we work towards making TB care more accessible, we must also consider the experiences of those affected by TB. Often, programmes are designed from a position of expertise that

fails to account for the needs of those the programme aims to benefit. There is a glaring absence of the patient's voice in our TB control initiatives and a subsequent lack of understanding of the patient experience. The voices of those affected by TB matter because they break through pre-existing perceptions and provide real experiences and needs of those that have survived TB. There is a need for a sustained effort focused on benefiting them, easing their experiences, empowering them and making them the voice for change,” Dr Rajeev Gowda, Former Rajya Sabha member, adds.

The fight against TB requires the combined effort of many sectors. The pandemic has shown us that it is possible to tackle such diseases if we work together and that there is much to be learned from the COVID-19 response.

OTHER SPORT